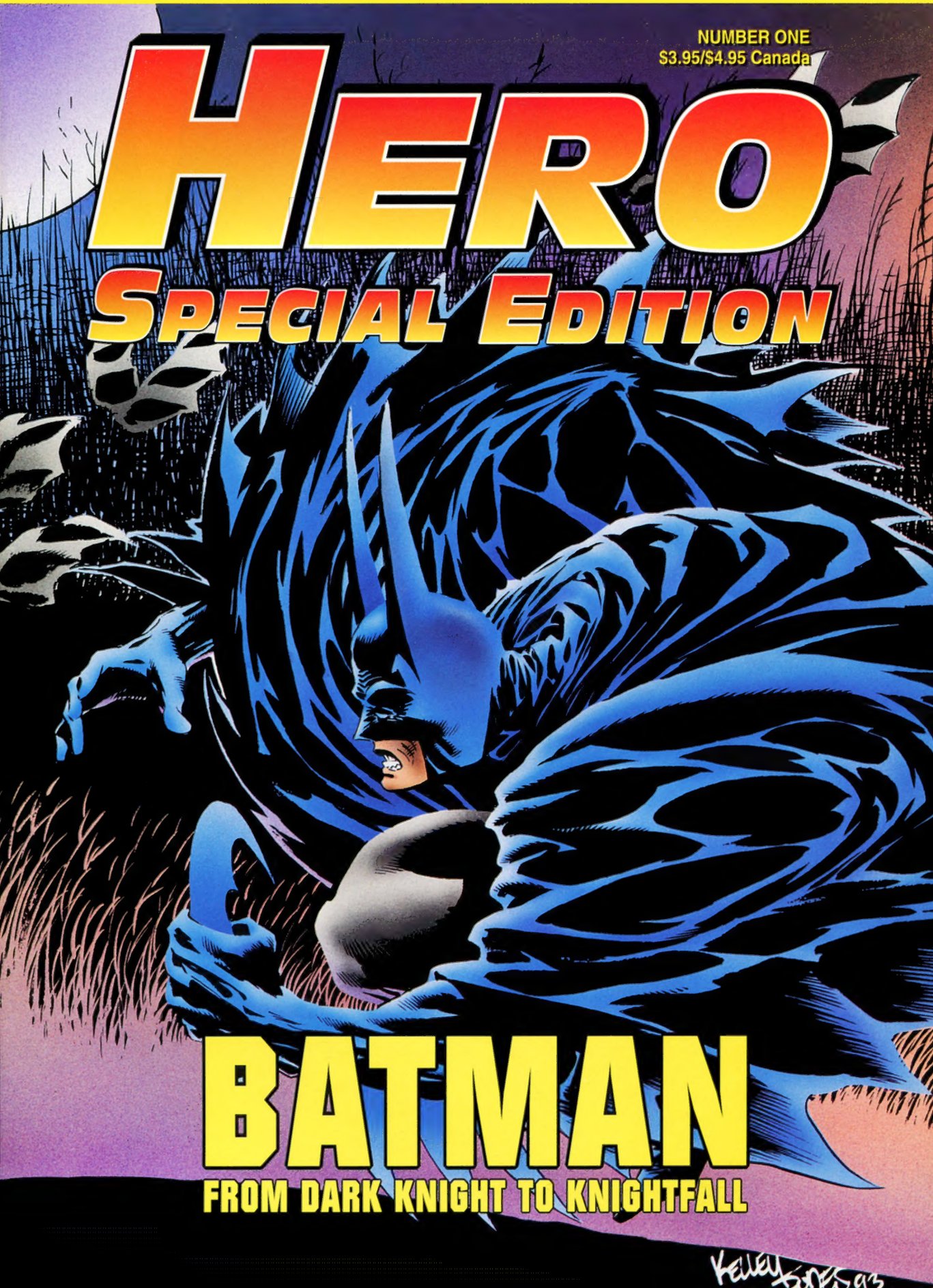
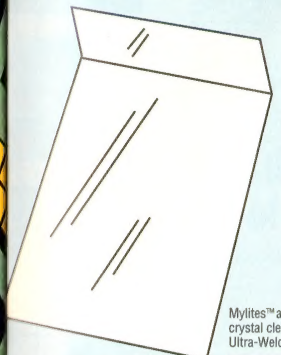
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BATMAN
FROM DARK KNIGHT TO KNIGHTFALL













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TO THE BATCAVE...

It is hard for a Caped Crusader to find respect among a generation whose earliest memories of said character involve "Bat Shark Repellent" and disintegrating henchmen.

For those of us who grew up in the '60s and '70s, Batman was not a dark and ominous character but rather a bright and cheery sort, making Gotham safe for all of the innocent bystanders of the world. Adam West made "Camp Batman" a fun and fashionable place to be. Batmania helped legitimize comics, just as the Superman TV show did in the '50s.

Then came the era of seriousness at DC. Green Arrow's sidekick, Speedy, was seen shooting up heroine on the cover of a comic book and all of a sudden, it was okay for the funny-books to be not quite so funny again. Again, Batman turned toward his Dark Knight tendencies, striking fear into the hearts of criminals everywhere.

Thus, the Batman books traveled along, through good writers and bad, artists of mediocre to exceptional talent, and a few story lines that would even embarrass the old Justice League — and then came Frank Miller. *Dark Knight Returns* was nothing less than a phenomenon. This mini-series broke ground on several levels. It was the first prestige format book, and the most expensive comic ever released at a whopping $2.95! It broke rules that no other comic even dared to bend and for that, DC was rewarded greatly. Once again, The Batman was becoming the character to watch in the DC universe.

To bring the excitement to an even higher level, the long awaited Batman movie finally appeared. The younger readers may not know what is meant by "long awaited," but I refer to the first time both myself and thousands of other comic fans like me heard rumors about a Batman movie gearing up for production, an article in a 1978 issue of Comics Journal. The article talked about how they were going to do this Batman movie right, and how it would be nothing like the old TV show of the '60s. They were right, it wasn't.

Still, seeing Jack Nicholson play the Joker was worth the wait.

Now it is the '90s, and fifty years after his birth, Batman continues to draw excitement. As I am writing this, we are about two weeks away from *Batman 500*, the issue that will once again present a new road for the character to go down. Changes mean excitement, and the *Death of Superman* has shown us that DC is not afraid of those changes.

And here in the '90s, where $2.95 comics are not uncommon, where characters kill bad-guys and occasionally good guys on a regular basis — where even the coolest characters can get tied into a movie script that makes an airline disaster look like a lot of fun — maybe Camp Batman wasn't such a bad place to visit after all.

It also goes to show that a character can evolve and change to suit different attitudes and generations. Maybe someday they'll even bring back one of my favorites — Batmite.

– Marc Camron
Editor



P.S. This is the first of what we hope to be many HERO Specials, and we want to know what subjects you, the readers, would like to see Specials on. Please drop us a line with your suggestions to:

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Lombard, IL 60148

BATMAN
FROM DARK KNIGHT TO KNIGHTFALL

OCTOBER, 1993
Volume 1, Number 1
A WARRIOR PUBLICATIONS PERIODICAL

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SPECIAL THANKS TO
Patty Jeres and the gang at DC for all of their help.
Joe Desris for providing many of the photos used.
Paul Dini for facilitating the information exchange on Batman: T.A.S.
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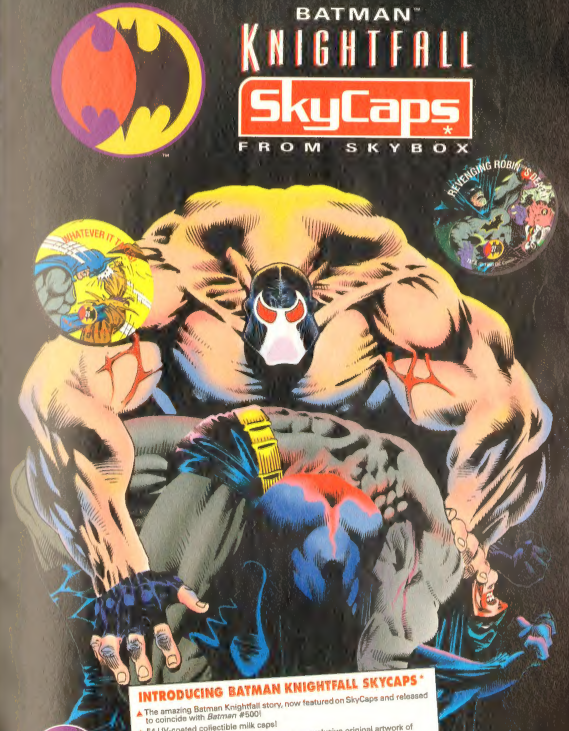
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BATMAN LETTER ART

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Miami, FL
Wins Batman Archives #1&2

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Chris Meeks
Hot Springs, AZ
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Matt Dembowski
Pittsburgh, PA



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Mark Harrell
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Ramona, CA



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James Morin
Chino Hills, CA



Nathan Liu
Gilory, CA



Ricardo Viramontes
Deming, NM

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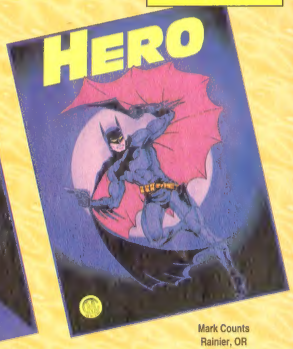
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Wins Platinum Batman #492

SECOND PLACE



Mark Counts
Rainier, OR
Wins Gold Sword of Azreal Trade Paperback



Jason Vandenberg
Appleton, WI



Ian De La Paz
Chicago, IL



Lewis J. Greene II
Oxon Hill, MD

MORE BATMAN ART



Shane Swafford
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Henry Conley
Warren, RI



Brian Rabold
Puyallup, WA



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MOST ORIGINAL



Janet Hetherington
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
For drawing the most original piece, Janet gets a Platinum Batman #432!



Todd Holcomb
Wyoming, MI



Dan Lujan
San Gabriel, CA



Christine Canney
Staten Island, NY



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Stephen Wojnar Jr.
Hollywood, FL



Brad Pearce
Gainesville, FL



Ravi Patel
Willits, CA



Duane Giddens
Lithia, FL

? ? ? ?

WONDER
is the foundation of all philosophy.
—Montaigne

? ? ? ?

In the beginning, it was a sense of wonder — a bright spark of the imagination — that gave rise to comic books and the comics business.

We, too, have wondered …

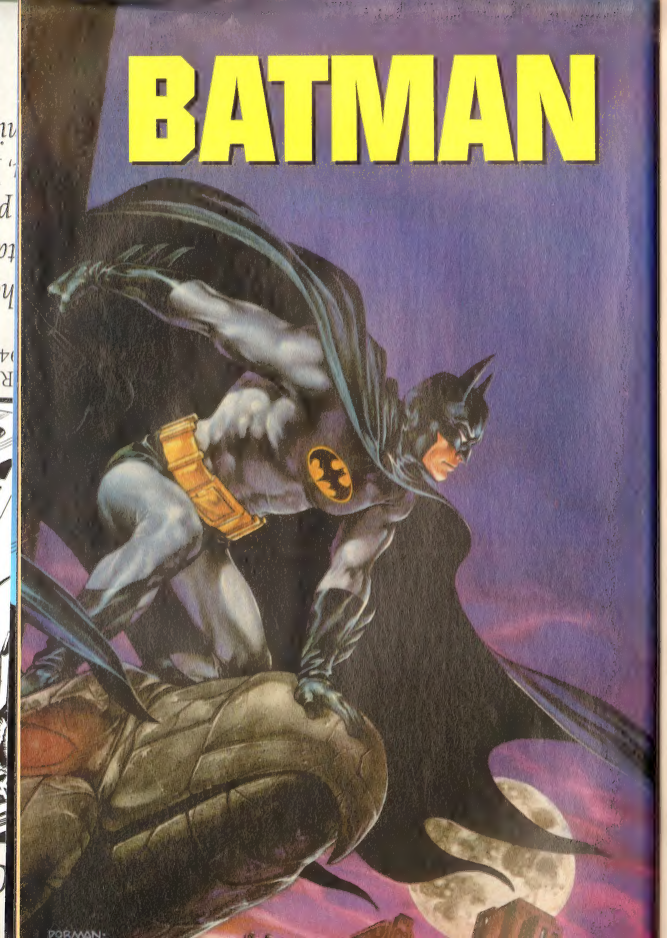
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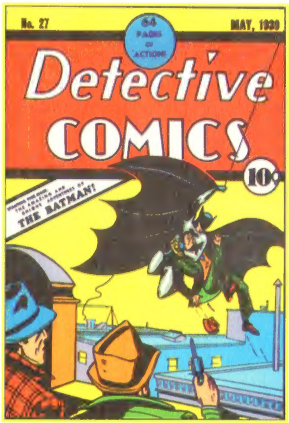
by Mike Tiefenbacher

A fair approximation of the number of superheroes created to date might be in excess of 3,000. Of that number, perhaps 850 of them can trace their origins to the Golden Age of Comics, the pre-Comics Code heyday of superheroes. Of those, 500 (maybe half that number) have managed to survive to the present day in one form or another (usually in name only) — though eliminating those who had gaps in their careers of more than a decade whittles that number down to only a few more than a dozen. Removing from that list anyone who's gone more than a year during their careers without an appearance in a comic book, brings you down to three: Superman, Wonder Woman, and Batman. And, of those three characters, there is only one who has appeared in at least one comic book every month since 1939.

By now, you may have guessed who that is.

Batman: the Caped Crusader, the Darknight Detective, the Masked Manhunter and trusted defender of Gotham City...or The Batman: the Dark Knight, weird creature of the night, terror of criminals, relentless pursuer of evil...star of comics, film, radio, prose, and television...the most brilliant mind in the comics universe, compelled by violent circumstances to battle crime using sophisticated tools. Driven yet law-abiding, level-headed and unpresupposing or, conversely, sometimes overcome by his violent compulsion, willing to ignore legal means to gain personal vengeance with his fists. Officially sanctioned, universally appreciated by the law-abiding or mistrusted, feared, and avoided by good and evil alike.

Batman has been — is — all these things. Perhaps that is the greatest testimony to his longevity, rather than any of the above characteristics or facts. The strength of the basic concept is such that it has, through the past 54 years, managed to weather dozens of clearly different story and art approaches by a brace of creators in comics, comic strips, radio, movies, television ,and animation. They are so varied they stymie side-by-side comparison, yet come out none the worse for wear —in fact, current sales of the BATMAN titles are healthier than they've ever been. The clearest proof of the vitality of the Batman character is the fact that DC is currently publishing several different and mutually exclusive treatments of the character. And still Batman endures.



But we're getting ahead of the story.

Let's go back to the beginning, May 1939. Comic books as an original source of non-reprints of newspaper comic strips had only been around about five years. As they were not created in a vacuum, they naturally reflected the influence of the movies, radio shows, books, pulp magazines, and popular comic strips of the day: they featured humorous humans and funny animals; daunting detectives and daring pilots; pirates, cowboys, gang busters, secret agents, soldiers of fortune, reporters of gangland perfidy, primitive spacemen, sophisticated barbarians, backwards-talking magicians; and jungle swingers. And, since the pulps had their super-heroes such as the Shadow and Doc Savage, radio had the Lone Ranger and Green Hornet, books had the Scarlet Pimpernel and Zorro, and the comic-strip pages had the Phantom (all of whom would be ancestors of Batman), there was plenty of precedent for the introduction of new











Since comics didn't need to adhere to the plausible, the most fantastically unrealistic feats could be made to seem possible. And unlike the daily comics, pulps, or movies, comic books were in color, so Superman wore colorful clothing that few would attempt in real life. Superman seemed unlike anything you could find anywhere else, meaning you needed to buy a comic book to experience it. Suddenly, there was a reason to buy comics, and publishers began to take notice.

May of 1939 marked the debut of a superhero meant to duplicate Superman's success — the immortal Wonder Man, whose debut in *Wonder Comics #1* was the first of a number of Superman imitators forced from publication by threats of legal action by DC lawyers. Obviously, duplicating Superman's success would not be a matter of duplicating the character himself. With the inspiration of the Man of Steel restricted to the heroic aspect and the costume, youthful cartoonist Bob Kane, who had already put in several years doing work for various comics publishers, and was now doing funny animals such as Pete the Pup and adventure characters such as Rusty & His Pals for DC (the latter in collaboration with writer Bill Finger), drew inspiration from other sources. An old idea based on Leonardo da Vinci's sketchbook flying machine brought in the basic idea of bat-type wings. Zorro brought the idea of a masked man battling evil at night while dressed in black and using a secret cave as his headquarters. The Shadow pulps and radio series brought in the idea of crime-fighter as an unseen force of nature,e striking terror into the hearts of superstitious criminals. Several characters called "The Bat," which had appeared in the Popular Detective and other Standard Publications pulp titles, evidently had nothing to do with things, but there was also "The Bat," a 1926 silent movie based on a 1915 book which featured a killer called The Bat, which introduced the idea of the Bat Signal. It was made into a talkie in 1931 called *The Bat Whispers*, set in



a gothic mansion, bringing in the bat costume and the Gothic settings of Wayne Manor and the Batcave.

Kane brought in the very basic idea to his uncredited collaborator Bill Finger, who did the actual connecting of the dots to make the first strips a reality, suggesting alterations in the cowled costume and gloves, the secret identity, Commissioner Gordon (from the first story), Gotham City (in late 1940), and the pulp-influenced story aspects, such as the utility belt. Their first strip was accepted by DC editor Whitney Ellsworth and published in *Detective Comics #27*, dated May 1939 and issued that March. However, the development of the character was far from complete.











Batman's full origin was finally laid out in *Detective Comics #33*, November 1939. Thomas and Martha Wayne and their young son, Bruce, were walking home from the picture show when they were stopped by an armed robber who demanded the necklace Martha was wearing. Her husband stepped between them and was rewarded for his bravery with a bullet, killing him instantly. Martha cradled her husband and called for help, prompting another shot, which killed her — all within view of their pre-teen son. The killer fled, leaving the boy alive — easily the worst mistake he ever made.

Moving ahead 15 years, Bruce Wayne, now grown to manhood, and who had spent the intervening years developing a superbly conditioned athletic body and a mind trained in every aspect of criminology, is independently wealthy from the estate left to him by his parents. He would have no trouble developing and constructing the apparatus which would support him in his war against crime. But Bruce decided he needed a disguise in, perhaps, one of the most easily remembered bits of comic book dialogue ever:

"Criminals are a superstitious, cowardly lot, so my disguise must be able to strike terror into their hearts. I must be a creature of the night, black, terrible...a...a...' As if in answer, a huge bat flies in the open window! 'A bat! That's it! It's an omen! I shall become a bat!' And thus is born this weird figure of the dark...this avenger of evil — the Batman."

With some later revisions — Martha was said to have died of a heart attack after the shooting of her husband — the Batman guise was said to have been unconsciously inspired by a masquerade costume worn by Thomas when Bruce was a child; the gunman, dubbed Joe Chill, was said to have been hired by convicted bank robber, Lew Moxton, to seek revenge on the elder Wayne for having helped send him to prison — this origin has more or less withstood for 54 years.

As with nearly every long-running series for television, the Batman of that first "season" was not the character most people grew to know over the years. For one thing, he was originally called "The Bat-Man," an appellation which first became "Bat Man" (which is how the strip's logo, eventually used on the Batman strip and comic, remained until the mid'60s), and finally "Batman," sometimes, but more often than not, without the prefix "The." The costume was yet to be modified to its final appearance: its ears were longer and far pointier, its color far more black than blue, its cowl less form-fitting, and the cape more wing-like. The forms of Batman's m.o. were different as well, with Batman sending live bats to bad guys or leaving calling cards attached to unconscious crooks, a la the Saint. Gotham City was still called New York City. There was no Bat-Signal, Batmobile, Batcave, utility belt, nor a faithful valet. Commissioner James Gordon was not yet a Batman supporter, acting much the same as virtually every police official has done in every superhero strip subsequently created. (It would take until *Batman #7*, October-November 1941, before Commissioner Gordon would finally award Batman and Robin "honorary member" status on the Gotham Police Department.) Batman shared his secret identity with no one.

But most telling, Batman was not averse to using pain to extort confessions from crooks — and occasionally using a pistol or other gun against criminals, actually







killing several — an act which later, outside of war comics, became the dividing line between which characters could legitimately be termed superheroes and which they were simply murderous vigilantes within the DC universe. (These means might have been acceptable conduct in the less explicit descriptions of pulp magazines like *The Shadow*, but laid out in picture form for the benefit of youngsters, it seems obvious that Batman would never have become as successful or long-lived had DC not developed a code of ethics of conduct for their heroes — and their writers. After that first year, Batman began to resemble the heroic character known today.

Certainly the most important missing element was yet to be found. For that first year in Detective Comics, Batman battled crime as a solo act. His motivations and activities were explored mostly through thought balloons; his comings and goings had to be clumsily explained by captions. Batman had no one to talk to, and there was no one to temper his seemingly insatiable thirst for vengeance.

In that first year, Kane had employed a young assistant named Jerry Robinson. At seventeen, eight years younger than Kane, there was something of a mentor-student relationship between them, and perhaps this was the impetus behind the creation of the second-most important member of the Batman cast. Robin, the Boy Wonder, was created for Detective Comics #40, April 1940, less than one year after the inception of the Caped Crusader.

Dick Grayson's parents, circus aerialists known as the Flying Graysons, were killed when their trapeze ropes were sabotaged



with acid by henchman of Boss Zucco, who had demanded protection money from circus owner Jack Haly. Bruce Wayne had been in the audience to witness Dick's parents' demise, and was so struck by the similarity to his own tragedy that he agreed, at Dick's request, to become his aid, training him in every aspect of the occupation until the pair were able to track down Zucco and acquire the evidence to put him away. Robin's costume seems to have been inspired by his circus background, though Kane maintains that it was inspired more by Robin Hood, hence the name. (Jerry Robinson himself has suggested that his own last name may also have been involved.) Either way, the addition of the brightly colored costume to the somber one worn by Batman inexorably changed the strip from a creature-of-the-night eeriness to one more concerned with classic detection and slam-bang action.

Prior to the introduction of Robin, Batman represented an amalgam of



many pre-existent heroes. This created an archetype; the kid sidekick was born. Within the next two years, amidst the hundreds of super-powered heroes directly inspired by the success of Superman, there came a similar avalanche of kid sidekicks directly inspired by the team of Batman and Robin as well as kids with adult sidekicks and groups of kids on their own. Though the practice of using adolescents as crime-fighters has gone out of style just as the median age of comic-book readers has risen, in 1940, the importance of having someone the same age as the bulk of the readership participating in the adventures as an equal partner to the adult in the stories cannot be overstressed. Without the existence of Robin, it is quite arguable that Batman might not still exist today.

Speaking of what inspired what, it should be pointed out that the most obvious antecedent of the Batman artistic look was Chester Gould's

ROGUE'S GALLERY



The Joker

First Appearance:
The arch-rival first showed up in *Batman #1*, Spring 1940.

The Joker, whose origin would not come for another eleven years (DETECTIVE #168, February 1951), was originally a wanton killer whose schtick was to rob jewels and leave their owners dead with a horrible grin on their faces. This was all right for a one-shot villain, but as it turned out, the maniacally clown-faced Joker would become popular enough with the editor and the readership that he would return again and again.

As with the retooling of Batman himself, a gentler, more mischievous Joker would become the recurring villain Batman would battle. The latter Joker was more interested in outwitting Batman while performing robbery after robbery, announcing his intentions or leaving joke-filled clues for the Dynamic Duo.

The Joker was modeled after the actor Conrad Veidt from the 1928 silent film, "The Man Who Laughs."

According to the 1951 origin, he had originally been a criminal called the Red Hood, and while escaping, he took a swim in toxic chemicals which altered the pigment in his skin and the color of his hair. Taking his new facial appearance to heart, he adopted the Joker identity and a bizarre sense of humor.

Being certifiably insane, the Joker is permanently housed in Gotham's Arkham Asylum.

Catwoman



First Appearance:
Batman #1, Spring 1940, gave us the initial glance at this bad kitty.

Selina Kyle had been in an airplane crash which erased her memory and quite clearly caused other pressure on her brain. The previously honest airline stewardess (and later, pet-shop owner) took up criminal activity, perhaps in the unspoken hope that apprehension by authorities would provide her with the medical attention she needed. In any case, she too became involved in jewel robberies, using cats and cat-themed operations.

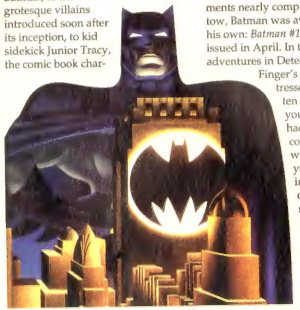
Quite unlike the bloodthirsty Joker, however, Catwoman was not only against killing, she was actually secretly in love with Batman. In her mind's jumbled state, the expression of her affection took the form of a continuous battle of wits with the Caped Crusader, and it continued throughout the 40s (she appeared nearly two-dozen times between 1940 and 1954).

Catwoman has come out of her criminal state at various times in her career, and sometimes manages to maintain her true personality.

The latest version is an ex-prostitute and cat-burglar, who learned her defensive and fighting skills from Ted Grant, the original Wildcat. Though she is protective of girls and young women who remind her of her own situation, she is apparently not unwilling to kill. This ambivalence, of course, is little different from other current alleged "heroes." She starred in a 1991 miniseries and in a 1993 ongoing series.



DICK TRACY comic strip. From the sharply drawn, chiseled profile of Batman, to the grotesque villains introduced soon after its inception, to kid sidekick Junior Tracy, the comic book character's genealogic ties to Tracy couldn't be clearer.



With its success assured, its elements nearly complete, and Robin in tow, Batman was awarded a book all his own: *Batman #1*, Spring 1940, issued in April. In the first year's adventures in Detective Comics, Bill Finger's scripts were buttressed by several written by Gardner Fox, a young lawyer who had recently come to comics and who would, within a year, create an impressive number of important superheroes himself (The Flash, Hawkman, Dr. Fate, and Sandman, as well as co-creating the *Justice Society of America* for ALL-STAR COMICS). Besides introducing Bruce Wayne's first fiancee (Julie Madison), the Batarang and the first Batplane (all in *Detective #31*), Fox had created the first of Batman's fiendish adversaries, Doctor Death (*Detective #29* and *30*). He was soon followed by Finger's Prof. Hugo Strange, who was revived in the silver age in *Detective #471*), but neither of these adversaries would be the type of recurring villain Batman would thrive on in the '40s. *Batman #1* introduced two of those: Batman's all-time arch-enemy, the Joker, and the object of Batman's greatest confusion, Catwoman, called simply the Cat in her first appearance [see sidebar: "The Fearsome Foursome"]. A third important foe was introduced in *Detective #40*, June 1940: Clayface.

The year 1940 was also quite important for another reason. The previous year, DC had created their first giant-sized 100-page issue featuring all-new material: New York World's Fair Comics, promoting the two-year world exhibition which shared a city with DC Comics. It appeared too early to include Batman in its first year contents, but the 1940 summer, issue was a different matter, appearing late enough in the year to feature both Batman and Robin in its pages and on the cover. Sharing that cover with them and the fair's famous trylon and perisphere was the Man of Steel, Superman — a pairing deemed so successful that DC wisely followed up their two annuals in the spring of 1941 with a third, retitled *World's Best Comics*, again featuring Superman, Batman and Robin on the cover. Quickly turning it into a quarterly and slightly altering the title once more, DC found themselves with a third regular spot for its two most successful heroes with World's Finest Comics.



Superman led off each issue while Batman closed it out for the title's first 70 giant-sized issues (through



1954). Though successful, a later format development would alter and improve that arrangement.

By 1940, the Bob Kane Studio had grown by one with the hiring of George Roussos as background artist/inker and letterer. Roussos' aid was needed due to the increasing workload, supplemented only slightly by cover artist Fred Ray, and the developing talents of Jerry Robinson. Robinson was soon doing penciling of his own, sometimes working on stories Kane had laid out or partially penciled, and soon, doing his own full art by the 1941 issues directly for DC. (The easiest examples to cite are the solo Alfred tales in *Batman #22-36.*) Still, with the addition of World's Finest in 1941, things got tighter for both Kane and author Bill Finger. When DC sold the McClure Syndicate on a Batman syndicated daily and Sunday comic strip companion to their successful Superman strip in 1943, something had to give. Kane began to devote all his time to the daily and the first several months

ROGUE'S GALLERY

The Penguin



First Appearance:
Oswald showed up in *Detective Comics #58*, December, 1941.

Oswald Cobblepot, like the Joker before him, had a tendency to be lethal in his earliest appearances. But by 1943, he had ceased offing people, good or bad, and restricted himself to fraud, kidnapping, larceny, extortion and armed robbery — also outwitting Batman, which seems to be the thread holding these four villains together.

His origin was told only in the Silver Age, so there was nothing to contradict. The Penguin became a criminal after his mother died after a long illness, leaving him and his sister in debt, causing them to lose their pet bird shop.

The two thematic links throughout all his crimes are birds of all sorts and umbrellas (a carryover from his mother's insistence that he carry one for protection from the inclement weather, which had been the cause of her husband's death from pneumonia), of which he has dozens, each of with a different gimmick (concealed weapons, devices of transport, gas, powder, et al.). His nickname resulted from his appearance, given to him by bullies.

He too has resumed his murderous ways.

Besides his appearance in BATMAN RETURNS, the Penguin's most significant recent appearance has been in the BATMAN: THE PENGUIN TRIUMPHANT one-shot. Of his two screen portrayals, Burgess Meredith and Danny DeVito, only Meredith resembles the character from the comics.

The Riddler

Edward Nigma had cheated on a puzzle contest as a child and liked it. He followed it up with rigged puzzles in which he would benefit financially when he grew older, then took to committing crimes with puzzle-related clues to outwit the law.

After running into Batman and Robin, his obsession with puzzles became an obsession with out-puzzling the Dynamic Duo. Each crime he committed contained a clue to tantalize them, but it would often have dual solutions, so that he could claim that he was playing fair. Nonetheless, Batman — and Robin, who loved solving the brain twisters — would always prevail.

The post-Crisis Riddler's real name is Eddie Nashton, with Edward Nigma as an alias. He was nearly convinced by the Question into going straight, but, unluckily, was inhabited by a restless 17th century demon, who possessed his every action and caused him to perform terrible acts.

Upon capture, he was committed to the Arkham Asylum, from which Bane freed him for the Knightfall mini-series. He also starred in the BATMAN: RUN, RIDDLER, RUN mini-series within the last year.

Frank Gorshin and John Astin played him on the TV series, in which the character was revitalized and forever cemented Riddler's reputation as a major player.



First Appearance:
This rogue made a debut in *Detective #140*, October ,1940.






of the Sunday strip, so it was necessary for others to enter the picture on both the art and story. Jack Burnley was the first addition.

Starman had been pegged to become the fifth super-star in the DC firmament (after the introductions of The Flash and Green Lantern) in early 1941 when he was given the cover slot and lead feature in Adventure Comics. Jack Burnley was given the assignment of creating the name and character design as well as drawing it. Having been a sports cartoonist for King Features for most of the 30s, combining his realistic style and its Alex Raymond (artist on Fash Gordon) influences, Burnley was exactly right for the character. Unfortunately, despite later Gardner Fox stories, that certain something that had clicked with the first four heroes didn't do so this time, and Burnley left the strip by 1942. He was first given the task of doing covers for the Superman and Batman titles (his first had been that 1940 World's



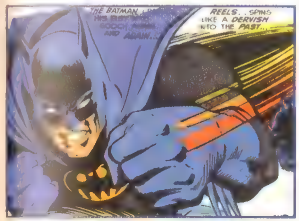
Fair cover), and finally the interior Batman stories. Burnley based his approach to the character on Kane's, but somehow managed to convey the sense of realism missing from the original. Years later, the Warner Bros. Batman cartoon show producer, Bruce Timm, admitted that they had used Burnley's rendition of Batman as the basis for their show's model sheets. Burnley was eventually given the prestigious Sunday comic strip assignment first for Superman, then the Batman Sunday as well, doing the latter until its demise in 1946. Burnley — who had been assisted on backgrounds by his brother Ray and on lettering by his sister Betty Brantley — left DC in 1947 to return to sports cartooning, but his last stories were in Batman and Detective Comics. All his work, as would almost every subsequent Batman story until 1968, was signed "Bob Kane," due to a contract Kane had negotiated with DC in the strip's






earliest days.

Perhaps the most important addition to the Batman creative pantheon arrived in 1941, although his stories were stockpiled for a time, in case Kane or Burnley were drafted, and he would have to fill the breach.



Dick Sprang had been working mainly in newspapers and advertising during the '30s and successfully passed an audition to draw Batman by editor Whitney Ellsworth in 1941, receiving that first official assignment. By the time it became certain that he would be needed to replace Kane as one of the regular artists, (it was 1943) the next 20 years of Batman were marked by regular appearances by Sprang's artwork — and what artwork it was! Sprang eschewed the realistic approach of Burnley, taking Kane's model sheets to the extreme, with more skill and talent than either Kane or Gould. Where Kane's figures were frequently awkward and malproportioned, Sprang's were sleek and tastefully exaggerated. If a skyscraper or a roller coaster was called for, Sprang's rendering was meticulous. As with Burnley, inkers found inking Sprang a pleasure because there was no guessing what he wanted. Most importantly, long-time readers remember the Sprang stories as their favorites, even when they didn't know Sprang's name or even that he was not the same "Bob Kane" that did the other issues Sprang did hundreds of stories for both Batman and Detective Comics, a short stint on the daily strip, and was the chief artist on World's Finest Comics between 1954 and 1963. With the renewed popularity of the character due to the 1989 film, and

ROGUE'S GALLERY



Clayface

First Appearance:
Detective Comics #40
June 1940

Deranged character actor and master make-up artist Basil Karlo, who, in a pastiche of the Phantom of the Opera, haunted a movie set and killed off the actors.

After two Golden-Age appearances, he was revived in the late '80s as part of the Muckpack.

Taking blood samples from the three claytaces who followed him, he gained their powers and became the Ultimate Clayface. He has the ability to shape his pliable body into many objects, as well as being able to liquify his body to get in those hard-to-reach places.



Scarecrow

First Appearance:
World's Finest Comics #3 Fall 1941

Professor Jonathan Crane, a beleaguered ex-college psychology professor was nicknamed scarecrow based on his scrawny appearance.

Two Golden-Age appearances were followed by a return in the mid-60s in which he had gained the chemical means to cause intense fear in his victims.

He was a member of the Injustice Gang of the World and teamed up with the Joker to make Batman's life difficult in the Knightfall mini-series. However, their partnership was short lived, due to the different methods of operation by these two jokers.



The Mad Hatter

First Appearance:
Batman #49
Oct.-Nov., 1948

While inventing a freeze weapon, the criminal scientist, who would become first known as Mr. Zero, exposed himself to a freezing solution which condemned him to live in an arctic-like, zero-degree environment.

After his first capture, and subsequent portrayal on television series as Mr. Freeze (played by George Sanders, Otto Preminger and Eli Wallach), has subsequently used the latter name instead, maintaining ice-themes for all reappearances.

Since he cannot live in normal temperatures, he is, without a doubt, one of the coolest of Batman's villains.



Mr. Freeze
(Mr. Zero)

First Appearance:
Batman #121
February 1959









nostalgia for the earlier version fresh in the minds of collectors, DC got him back to do a trio of his stylized covers in 1990, fitting quite comfortably amidst the much younger stylists of today.

By late 1940, Batman and Robin were riding around Gotham City in a Batmobile (*Detective #48*, February 1941) with a huge bat's head on its grill and a scalloped stabilizing fin on its roof. Before two years had passed, Bruce Wayne had broken up with Julie Madison and taken up with Linda Page, whom he would romance through *Batman #32*, (December 1945-January 1946).

The utility belt had been developed and streamlined to contain the batrope, originally hung on its exterior; inside were the Batarangs and other weaponry which would be employed for years to come. He had encountered a trio of recurring archfoes for the first time: The Penguin, Two-Face, and The Scarecrow [see: "Batman's Rogues Gallery"].

Commissioner Gordon was first able to summon Batman and Robin to his office via the Bat-Signal in *Detective #60* (February 1942).

Perhaps fearing that he would be spread too thin (or, more likely, that their presence would overshadow the lesser-known members), the DC editors opted not to have either Batman or Superman join the Justice Society of America on a full-time basis However, the pair were named honorary members and even made a cameo appearance.

1943 featured a number of firsts beyond the debuts of the Batcave and the McClure Syndicate comic strip. *Batman #16*, April-May 1943, marked the first appearance of Bruce Wayne's faithful, trusted butler, valet and manservant, Alfred. (No last name was originally given, though he later used the name Alfred "Beagle" when he set up his own detective agency in *Detective Comics #96*. This is what is presumed to make that the name of the character residing on Earth-Two prior to the Crisis on Infinite Earths; the Earth-One version was dubbed Alfred "Pennyworth" in *Batman #216*,









September 1969).

The other occurrence marking 1943 was the filming and release of the aforementioned Columbia 15-chapter serial, Batman (featuring Robin), which proved the growing popularity of the Dynamic Duo.

Another effect occurring later that year, thanks to the actor cast to play him in the film, Alfred was transformed from his original, portly, bald and clean-shaven appearance to the one he retains today: slim and with a bit of hair on his head and upper lip.

The final major addition to the core cast of semi-regular supporting characters occurred in *Batman #24*: Professor Carter Nichols. Though the idea of such earth-bound characters as Batman and Robin becoming victims of science-fiction tales seems as if it were a misstep taken in the sales years of the late 1950s, this is not true; Carter Nichols was a renowned scientist who provided



the means by which Batman and Robin were able to travel back in time to whatever bygone era they wished.

They met such ancient literary heroes as the Three Musketeers and Robin Hood (which might explain the ulterior motive of the series: to get young readers interested in the classics), and met such actual historical figures as Leonardo da Vinci, Marco Polo, and Kubla Khan. Often the trips were simply made to confirm Nichols scientific theories, but sometimes they fulfilled missions. The original technique used was hypnosis, but by 1956, that technique had been supplanted by a time-ray device.

The next several years featured no new major adversaries, nor were there many alterations of the creative teams. Before the war ended, however, Batman and Robin had made their first appearances as radio stars. Though scripts were apparently

ROGUE'S GALLERY



Two-Face

First Appearance:
Detective Comics #66
April 1942

on the left side of his
from acid thrown by a
criminal.

Unable to deal with his
new look, Dent lost his
mind and became the
criminal Two-Face, using
a scarred double-headed
silver dollar to determine
whether his actions will
be good or evil.

After reforming for a
brief period, and being
impersonated by several
imposters, Two-Face has
reverted to crime, and this
time, it looks like it's
going to be forever.

All of his crimes are
based on the number two
or the Yin and Yang duality of nature.



Poison Ivy

First Appearance:
Batman #181
June 1966

Botanist Pamela Isley committed a theft and was poisoned by her collaborator, but instead of dying, she developed an immunity to all poisons. Using poisonous plants as her weapons, Ivy later developed monster plants for use in her crimes. She has been a member of four criminal organizations: The 100, the Injustice Gang of the World, the Secret Society of Villains and the Suicide Squad.

It was in the latter series that she worked for the government as a mercenary for hire, to work for an early parol. The group was disbanded before she could reap the benefits of being a hired gun.



Ra's Al Ghul

First Appearance:
Batman #232
June 1971

is the head of a
criminal orga-
which has, at

their battles
dicated by Ra's
alia. (Talia

in love with the
nder.)
hul's greatest
Lazarus Pit,

y for those
health intact
n the bath sev

a refugee from the World Wrestling Federation, spent 30 tortured years in a Carribean island-nation for crimes alleged to have been committed by his father. Needless to say, his incarceration has left him a little more than psychotic.

Injected with steroids, he's a big, powerful, mean, and out to destroy both the Dark Knight and Gotham City.

He's broken Batman's back so far, and looks like he'll break a lot more, before he's through. He has also employed Catwoman, although he's claimed to have her killed.



Bane

First Appearance:
Batman: the Vengeance of Bane #1
January 1993











Kane brought Marilyn Monroe to the comics in the form of Vicki Vale, a character originally intended only for the movie serials.

written for a Batman series, no sponsors were found and the Caped Crusaders were forced to settle for guest appearances on the show named after their pal, Superman

1946 marked the return of those DC staffers who had served in World War II, and among the many changes in the long-running DC titles that followed was the changeover of the lead feature in Star Spangled Comics. The Newsboy Legion had their final adventure in *Star Spangled #64*, and issue #65, featured the very first Robin solo story. These usually featured Robin on his own, although Alfred made appearances in the very early stories.

Robin received an arch-enemy of his own (The Clock) and in 1949 there are about a dozen issues in which Batman is prominently featured on the covers and actually co-stars in the stories (differentiated from Batman stories simply by the degree to which Robin is involved in the plot's solution. In one story, for example, Batman spends the entire story stranded on an island). Robin's stint as solo hero was quite successful, spending a total of 66 issues as either the cover feature or supporting feature.

1947 will probably stand out in the memories of readers of *All Star Comics*, as #36 turned out to be the solitary issue which featured a Justice Society of America case in which Batman and Superman actually took part.

Perhaps not so coincidentally, this roughly corresponded with the consolidation of the two divisions of DC, Detective Comics and All-American, into one company (National Comics) with its offices under the same roof. The JSA, which had dropped all the heroes from the DC half of the line in 1943, when the paper shortage required the two to become separate in order to get better newsprint allotments, celebrated the reunification by spotlighting the DC line's two top heroes for the first (and last) time.

Naturally, by the time the '60s rolled around and the JSA was revived, all such distinctions were ignored. Batman and Superman were treated as longtime, full-fledged members in good standing.

1947 was also something of a turning point for the creative personnel. Jack Burnley retired from comic books, and both Jerry Robinson and George Roussos had left Bob Kane's employ to go solo. Kane experimented with assistants until he settled on Lew Sayre Schwartz, who would essentially draw the strip from 1948 through 1954.

Schwartz's style was characterized by a far looser approach to anatomy than Sprang or Robinson, which was not unattractive, although much of the effect was lost because Kane (no longer occupied with the daily strip) would do the tight renderings of both Batman and Robin over his layouts

Beyond these stories, which could still be legitimately credited to the signed "Bob Kane," there were new members of the art team: Jim Mooney, who had put in seven years working for the smaller golden-age era companies including Marvel, and Winslow Mortimer, a Canadian artist fresh from art school who had to be put on salary by DC in order for him to get his green card and remain in the U.S. Both did spot stories throughout the late '40s and early '50s, though Mortimer eventually spent more of his time doing covers for titles in the DC line for most of the '50s



...e Herron and William ...dolk, both of whom had plenty ...erience in writing both pulp ...nd comics, joined the writers ... Perhaps the most important ...pment, however, was not ... seen in the Batman comics ...942, DC Comics were subtitled "...perman Publication." Besides ...ng roles in *Superman*, *Action* ...nd *World's Finest Comics*, ...an's adventures as a boy had ... in the new Superboy series in More Fun Comics and then Adventure Comics

...s clear that Superman was the ...hise and that playing up resem... between its two major heroes ...strategy DC would be foolish ...exploit

...gh Superboy would be just ...p of the iceberg, it established the idea of the "Superman family" of ...acters, each of whom could be recalled for story possibilities — an ...rtant factor when there were so ...stories to be written in any ...ear

...e first inkling that Batman ... be following this path ...curred in the second Batman Columbia 15-chapter serial, *New ...tures of Batman and Robin*, and ...roduction of Bruce Wayne and Batman's new combination love ... and secret-identity snoop, ...ale

...ause Kane had recently met a Hollywood starlet named Norma Jean Baker (Marilyn Monroe) and ...d to use her caricature in the ..., Vicki Vale made the transi... ...m the screen in *Batman #49*, October-November 1948.

... Superman had Lois Lane ...g his steps in an attempt to ...t out his dual identity, so too ... Batman now have to contend ...n equally curious and seem... repressible "news-hen" with ... initials. Just how irrepressible ... can be underlined by the ...t that, having disappeared from ... comics in 1964, the redheaded











reporter would not be kept in limbo forever, reappearing nearly twenty years later in (*Batman Annual #19*). Though it would be seven more years before the "Batman family" concept would become truly evident, the die was cast.

Excitement caused by the serial and the influx of new writers and, subsequently, new characters, didn't stop with Vicki Vale. A host of new crooks popped up, some of whom would not find true success for another fifteen years. The most important was The Riddler, but appearing earlier that same month was Jervis Tetch, the Mad Hatter, in the same story which introduced Vicki Vale. Later important entries in the villain sweepstakes included Deadshot, Killer Moth, and Catwoman's brother, the King of the Cats.

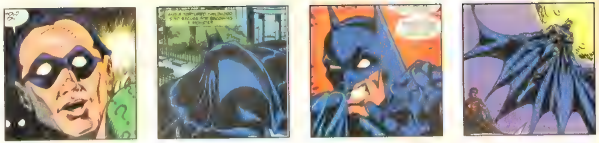


The first Batman special issue was published in 1953 as part of the brief 3-D movie and comic-book craze, 3-D Batman, featuring straight reprints. It was reprinted in 1966 with a new cover

Surely the most important occurrence of the first half of the 1950s for Batman and Robin didn't occur in a Batman family title. *Superman #76* (May-June 1952) featured a guest appearance by Batman in which he and the Man of Steel accidentally learned each other's secret identity while aboard an ocean liner.

This set the stage for what would happen in *World's Finest Comics* two years later. Due to declining sales of their two 15-cent 64-page titles, *World's Finest* was reduced to 32 pages and #70 had been the last to feature Superman and Batman in their own stories. Issue #71 was the first to co-star the new super-team of the ultra-powerful Superman, and the super-detectives Batman and Robin

Readers loved it immediately, the teaming of these beloved straight-arrow characters seeming nothing less than natural. Just as leaders of any field tend to congregate, their accomplishments in the field of



crime-fighting, and their shared experiences with fame and privacy always seemed to make their alliance a completely comfortable one.

Contrary to popular opinion, there was no discernable effect on any DC superhero titles with the institution of the Comics Code in late 1954. The DC code of conduct written a decade earlier had prevented virtually everything prohibited by the code anyway, so any changes in Batman might have had more to do with a malaise setting in on people who had worked on a feature for a long time. Around this period, authors Edmond Hamilton, his wife Leigh Brackett (who wrote one story) and Arnold Drake were added to the staff writing Batman tales. A more significant and permanent addition to the team was artist Sheldon Moldoff. Hired by Bob Kane to replace Lew Schwartz as his penciler, Moldoff wound up remaining in the penciler's chair from early 1954 all the way through the last half of 1967, all for work signed "Bob Kane." Moldoff had been one of DC's earliest bright lights on the Hawkman strip using a realistic Alex Raymond influence and had most recently worked for Fawcett before it left the comics business. More than any other artist, he was able to suppress his own style in favor of Kane's, even when it was required that it become more realistic in 1964.

The Batman family grew by one in July 1956 when Batwoman made her debut. J'onn J'onzz had initially appeared eight months earlier and is considered to be the first superhero of the Silver Age by many, making the Girl Gangbuster second.

Kathy Kane had been a circus stunt performer until she inherited a fortune and retired, quickly becoming bored. With Batman as her inspiration, she decided to model herself after him down to building a mansion with a Batcave beneath it, and stocking a shoulder-bag with all the weapons Batman carried in his utility belt. After initial resistance, and after ferreting out her secret identity, Batman and Robin gradually grew to accept her as an occasional comrade-in-arms.

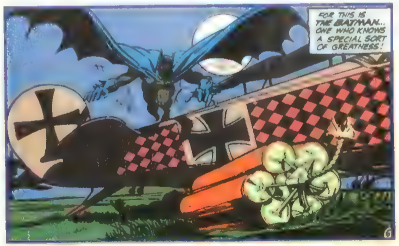
In April 1961, she was joined by her niece Betty, who became the first Batgirl. Both characters resembled Robin in circus-inspired costuming more than Batman, and both rode motorcycles for transportation. Each was dropped from the stories in 1964, only to return in the mid 70s. Batwoman was revived in 1977, only to be run over by an elephant and killed. Bat-Girl was brought back as one of the Titans West in Teen Titans, and remains in the DC universe (sort of) as Bette Kane, now called Flamebird (the third one of that name in thirty years), still a member of the Titans.

In 1959, the first clear evidence of what would become the parallel world Earth-One was established with the creation of the Justice League of America. This time around, Batman was a charter member and a mainstay until 1983, when he left to create the Outsiders team.

Curiously, though the Earth-Two Batman and Robin were eventually established as being separate characters and members of the Justice Society, nearly all of the original Batman history, including all original villains, was retained by the Earth-One version (1939's *Dr. Death* and *Hugo Strange*, for example, showed up in the late '70s on *Earth-One*), even after the Earth-Two Batman was killed in action. This unwitting unwillingness to declare a line of demarcation between the two sets of very similar characters could've been one of the factors that caused DC to create the Crisis On Infinite Earths.

During the late '50s, perhaps due to the malaise alluded to previously, many of (though not all) the Batman strips began to retain more and more science-fiction aspects. Robots, aliens, time and space travel, imaginary stories (as "written" by Alfred) and other plot devices were being utilized in Batman stories. Added to the Batman family of characters were Ace the Bat-Hound (in answer to Superman's Krypto), who seemed quite in the spirit of the '40s characters, and Bat-Mite (in answer to Superman's Mr. Myxzptlk), who didn't, introducing "magic" to the strip. Neither the science fiction nor the Bat family characters survived the purge of excess of 1964

Sales had not been terrific for a while on the Batman titles, and by 1964 DC's publishers decided full-scale revivication was necessary. Jack Schiff, who had edited the book since 1940, was taken off *Detective*, *Batman*, and *World's Finest*. Julius Schwartz literally traded titles with Schiff, Strange Adventures, and Mystery in Space going to Schiff while Schwartz took over the two Bat-titles. Superman editor Mort Weisinger simply added *World's Finest* to his Superman family of comics, then the seven biggest-selling DC titles.



The most immediate effects of this changeover was the first alteration of Batman's costume since the late '30s with a yellow "Bat-Signal" type emblem replacing the black-on-grey bat symbol that had been there early in 1965, the longtime Batman cover logo was also altered, correctly spelling his name as one word for the first time in 25 years.

Schwartz felt the character had become too cluttered with family members, and not only cut out all the "Bat" characters, he killed off Alfred as well (*Detective #328*, June 1964). The Alfred Foundation was established in his memory, and Bruce's Aunt Harriet joined the household in his stead almost immediately. Six months later, Batman and Robin first encountered the criminal mastermind called the Outsider, a devious genius who had intimate knowledge of Batman's most closely guarded secrets. Though it was not pre-planned, after a half-dozen battles, the Outsider was finally revealed to be an amnesiac Alfred, who wasn't quite dead after all. From then on, the charitable Alfred Foundation became known as the Wayne Foundation, under the administration of Lucius Fox, who also ran Wayne Enterprises.

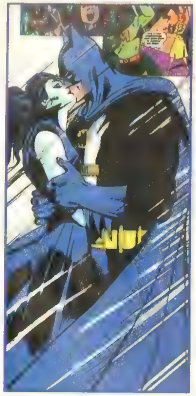


All-in-all, fandom appreciated the more carefully plotted and realistic approach, as well as the revival of longtime favorites such as the Joker, Penguin, and Riddler. For a while, with such semi-regular features as the Mystery Analysts of Gotham City, it appeared as if Batman was about to enter a new golden age. But this era didn't last two years, a victim of the impact of a totally unexpected source: television.

The ABC-TV BATMAN series debuted in January of 1966, and its impact on America was immediate, spawning a multitude of magazine covers, sales of all types of Batman toys, games, books, and other memorabilia, several dozen records, a revival of the daily and Sunday comic strips — and, oh yes, the sales of millions of *Batman* and *Detective* comic books.

Batman exceeded a million copies per issue (and we're talking about actual sales here, not dealer orders) in 1966, and DC, quite understandably, made sure that the TV viewers saw a Batman they recognized.

As the TV show approached the subject matter with quite a bit of humor, this was attempted in the comic books to varying degrees of success. Batman's presence in *World's Finest* and *Justice League* was played up to the extent of making him the largest figure on comics in which he was really a co-star. While this was good in the short term, too many longtime readers resented it, and when the show ran its course by 1968 and the TV viewers abandoned the comic for the next big thing, DC was again in a declining sales period. In retrospect, despite the tongue-in-cheek flavor, the series was actually far more in concert with the early comics than the more recent movies, and actually treated the characters with more respect.



Other than the tone, the most obvious result of the TV show's influence were the revivals of many oldtime villains, which the show used up on a one-per-week basis: Catwoman, the Mad Hatter, False-Face, and Mr. Zero as Mr. Freeze.

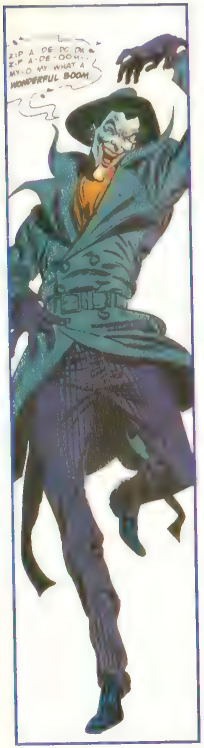
Equally important was the intention of the show's producers to bring in a new version of Batgirl; DC took the bull by the horns and steered it their own direction, coming up with a new character who was secretly Commissioner Gordon's daughter Barbara (*Detective #359*, January 1967's "The Million-Dollar Debut Of Batgirl"). Nonetheless, her costume was designed by artists for the TV series, and she actually made her comics debut in the daily comic strip Batgirl became a new regular











in the third season of the TV series, and made the character popular enough to last another 20 years.

Batman's TV career did not end with ABC's cancellation of the show in mid 68. A new cartoon version joined Superman and Aquaman on Saturday morning's schedule, and lasted until 1970. In 1974, a simplified version of the Justice League, Super Friends debuted with Batman and Robin on every episode, and that lasted until 1985. From 1977 to 1981, *New Adventures of Batman* (and various other titles) featured solo Batman and Robin tales again. Super Friends inspired a spin-off comic, but none of the shows had much of an effect on the comic characters, if any.

DC's management went through an upheaval in 1968, merging with Kinney National Service, appointing artist Carmine Infantino editorial director, and letting go many long-time employees after they began organizing a union to gain medical and pension coverage. Whether because of this or other reasons, Finger, Herron, Fox, Broome, Bob Kane, Moldoff, and Drake, among many others, were soon gone.

Under Infantino's direction, DC's longtime characters were getting their first fashion makeover in a long time, and while Clark Kent was becoming a TV reporter, another big change occurred for Batman: Robin was off to college, and Batman became a solo act again for the first time in three decades. This alteration to the basic concept changed Batman forever.

The immediate result was a Batman who was no longer so restrained and polite when punching his foes, calling them "scum," and generally losing whatever good nature for which he was once known. Further, more than one author intimated that Bruce Wayne's childhood trauma had created a permanent schizophrenic obsession with the eradication of crime and criminals (albeit one which took nearly thirty years to surface).

This was a Batman who rarely smiled (especially in stories by the influential O'Neil and Adams), and one who (under some writers, at least) tended to stick to nighttime crime-fighting. Visually, the Bat-Cape grew to parachute size, and the ears on his cowl far exceeded the proportions on real bats.

A comparison could finally be made, because a new member of the Bat family was added in *Detective #400*, June 1970, who practically fulfilled the "real bat" description. The chemically altered Kirk Langston was transformed into Man-Bat, a grotesquely humanoid bat-man, who ultimately turned out to be a good guy (and not dyslexic, either).

An addition on the other side of the coin (and the world) was the insidious Ras Al Ghul (literally, Arabic for "Death's Head"), leader of the League of Assassins and father of the beautiful Talia, to whom Batman occasionally found himself attracted. Robin got a new solo series in *Detective #386* (April 1969), alternating with Batgirl in the backup slot. Over in *World's Finest*, it seemed like the end of a beautiful friendship when Superman took over as the only regular in imitation of *The Brave and the Bold* in 1970.

When that experiment was













dropped after a little more than two years, imaginary tales featuring Superman Jr. and Batman Jr. (along with Superman and Batman) were their replacement. This lasted an even shorter period, and the old Superman and Batman team was revived, lasting all the way through the final issue, #323, January 1986.

Several Batman spin-offs began to appear. A new magazine devoted to Robin, Batgirl, Man-Bat, the Huntress (daughter of the Earth-Two Batman and Catwoman), Alfred, Commissioner Gordon, Bat-Mite, and Batwoman was launched: *The Batman Family* ran from #1, September-October 1975 through the DC Implosion (a corporately dictated scaling back of their line), the last now at #20, October-November 1978. It then merged with *Detective #481*, December 1978-January 1979, lasting there until #495, October 1980.

Man-Bat soloed in two issues of his own book in December 1975-January 1976 and February-March 1976. (A further reprint volume followed in December 1984, also numbered #1.) As mentioned, when *The Brave and the Bold* ended, Batman had time on his hands and so starred in *Batman and the Outsiders* from #1 (August 1983) through #32 (April 1986) when the team of superheroes left him to go out on their own. In the meantime, Dick Grayson (remember him?) who had left so many years before to be on his own, instead found himself firmly entrenched with the whole bunch of superheroes in *New Teen Titans*, and a romance with space-alien Starfire. He changed his costume completely and assumed the name of Nightwing.

The Joker got a nine-issue series of his own from 1975-76 (perhaps the first mass murderer to be so honored), Catwoman got to solo as a protagonist in various issues of *Detective Comics*, and the origin of Batman was retold in 1980 in a three-issue mini-series called *The Untold Legend of the Bat Man*.

Bruce Wayne was getting lonely in Batman and Detective talking to himself, but with *Batman #357*, March 1983, a lad named Jason Todd was introduced. In much the same circumstances as Dick Grayson so many years before, Jason's aerialist parents were murdered by criminals who turned out to be Killer Croc's gang, and Batman agreed to train him to become the new Robin.

Jason appeared in the Robin costume Dick Grayson had abandoned, and a long career seemed inevitable. Who could foresee what lay ahead?

From April 1985 through March of 1986, the entire DC pantheon of stars went through total upheaval with the Crisis on Infinite Earths, and Batman was no exception. At first glance, he seemed to have passed through it unscathed, especially since things seemed unchanged.

In June through November 1986, the four-issue imaginary mini-series *Batman: The Dark Knight* appeared, written and drawn by Frank Miller, and once more, Batman would never be the same. Batman was hardly the idealized character of old, being fatally flawed, and the old characters could hardly have been less social, the Joker in particular performing various immoral acts even the 1930s comics readers would never have accepted for an arch-villain.

More, nasty stuff abounded in dialogue and picture, the world view was one of oppressive corruption, of a total dearth of either justice or fairness, and such was the effect of Dark Knight that the Batman series in both titles began to reflect that feeling.

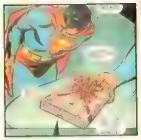
Miller himself scripted "Batman: Year One," which altered the characters of Commissioner Gordon, now



touched by political corruption and infidelity and Catwoman, who had been changed from a brain-affected protagonist to an ex-prostitute whose turn to crime had little to do with a knock on the head.

In one fell swoop, Batman as a character had been changed from a general audience/PG character to borderline-R. To the readers of any of DC's other titles, this would not have come as a shock, as the whole line had been made similarly "sophisticated," but to anyone from the outside, parents remembering the original or adolescent fans of the



TV reruns, the contrast was pretty traumatic. DC's rote description of "darker, more realistic" treatment of their characters was certainly the truth here, at least halfway.

Batman's origin itself was altered perceptibly, having moved to junior status in terms of tenure as a Gotham crimefighter. He was now preceded in history by both a cretinous gangbuster called the Reaper, who killed instead of captured the wicked, as well as Alan Scott, the original Green Lantern. Batman would no longer be the vanguard force against crime in that city, and fighting crime would no longer be his own idea.

Further details from the original origin were also altered (such as having been scared by a bat as a youth on the Wayne Manor grounds) — just enough to make certain that everyone knew this was now a different Batman. Commissioner Gordon's daughter, Barbara, was now his niece, though he later adopted her. The Huntress (who got her own brief series) was now no longer related at all to Batman or Catwoman, never mind being on Earth-Two.

In addition, Jason Todd's origin had completely changed. He was now a sneak thief who Bruce found stealing his tires — apparently a justifiable action because he was poor and taking care of himself after his ailing mother had died in their tenement home, his father long gone. Later it was revealed that his father had been an employee of Two-Face and killed by him. Bruce enrolled Jason in a hellish school which trained children for crime, but found out in time to prevent any permanent damage to the boy, whom he then adopted.

But if all of this was traumatic for readers, Batman himself was forced to undergo more emotional upheaval (it would require the vote of fans calling a DC hotline number to make the decision): the further trauma of witnessing Jason Todd's death at the hands of the Joker. Naturally, this had the effect of dropping any pretense of reserve, Batman's stifled rage against evil manifesting itself all over the place. Of course, no satisfactory closure could ever be gained, as the Joker is unkillable. In any case, that old character who simply brought 'em in and let the courts decide was long gone.

1993 introduced what will, perhaps, become the most popular mini-series of all: Knightfall.





Later, in 1989, the first of two feature films directed by Tim Burton was released. As merchandising has become even more sophisticated and all-encompassing than in 1966, the impact on the pocketbooks of America was even greater, and DC was far better prepared to exploit their character's success this time around.

Neither of the films seems to have overly affected the comics version this time around, since the comic was probably darker already, and the considerable liberties taken with the costume and the characters don't seem to have been reflected in the comics — which is just as well, given the huge plot holes in the films. However, both seem to have certainly spurred overall interest in the character. The monthly *Legends of the Dark Knight* issued in the wake of the first movie, enabled creative teams to do longform story lines out of continuity.

In August 1989, a young man named Tim Drake began to appear. Drake, it seems, also witnessed the death of the Flying Graysons as a toddler, and the memory of everything surrounding the occurrence stayed with him, so that when






Batman and Robin began appearing, he recognized their secret identities. He'd noticed that with Jason's death, Batman had begun to go a bit crazy, so he tried to reunite Batman and Dick Grayson to solve things.

In the course of matters, he donned the Robin costume and saved Batman, and at the urging of both Dick and Alfred, Bruce reluctantly went through the Robin training process for a third time, and grew closer to Tim when his parents were poisoned. The third Robin even received a new costume with long pants, perhaps intended to be indicative of his greater maturity, and with the brightly colored cape now a muted yellow.

When *Batman Returns* did appear, it brought the inevitable one-shots and mini-series, but it also brought a fourth monthly Batman title to the schedule: *Batman: Shadow of the Bat*. A further 1992 mini-series has turned out to be quite important as well: *Batman: Sword of Azrael* introduced a modern-day descendant of a holy order of assassins living in Gotham City. Azrael apparently abandoned his murderous behavior when he rescued Batman.

1993 introduced what will, perhaps, become the most popular mini-series of all: *Knightfall*. This 16-part crossover appearing in *Batman, Detective* and *Showcase '93* actually started in the *Batman: The Vengeance of Bane* one-shot in January 1993.

Bane, a mentally and physically tortured refugee from a Caribbean island prison, had heard of Batman while in custody and has, for reasons rather unclear, vowed to destroy him. He came to Gotham City and managed to free most of the Batman arch-foes from Arkham Asylum, including the Joker, the Riddler, the Scarecrow, Poison Ivy and the Firefly.

In *Batman #497*, July 1993, the ultra-strong Bane broke Batman's back, setting the stage for the former assassin Azrael to become the new protector of Gotham. The reverberations from these events will no doubt be felt for many issues to come.

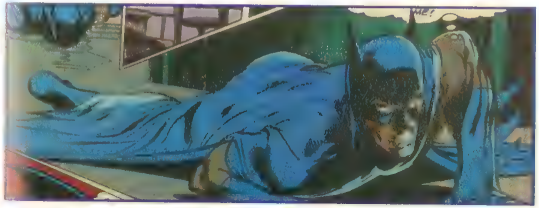
The other event that followed the release of the second film was the 1992 Warner Bros. *Batman: The Animated Series* on Fox, which also gave birth to a monthly comic based on it.

Followers of the original 45 years of Batman took heart when they saw that it seemed to be more in harmony with the old version than the current one. With many stories based on comic adventures of the '70s and early '80s, an art approach that mirrors the early '40s, and morals more in keeping with most accepted television heroes, the stories featuring this Batman appear in *Batman Adventures* in a less intense approach.

While something less than perfect (Robin is in college and wears the Tim Drake costume while Batman encounters all his foes for the first time), it's ironic that it would require writers and editors outside of DC to rediscover the finer aspects of the original concept. Perhaps the supreme irony is that, had DC followed their own post-Crisis rules, a comic based on a cartoon would never exist. That one does simply proves it: Batman is a concept which can and will endure many more incarnations.



And if the characters popularity continues to hold up, there are sure to be many more bat-books, bat-movies, bat-toys, bat-cards, and general bat-paraphernalia flowing into the world for some time to come.



WORKING WITH A LEGEND

THE MEN WHO MADE THE BATMAN FLY

by STEVE DARNELL

JULIUS SCHWARTZ

In 1964, when Julius Schwartz got the offer to edit the Batman titles, he readily admits that he "was not even familiar with Batman. I had only casually read the magazine, but I wasn't a student." His confession of ignorance didn't faze his bosses, who knew only one thing: sales on Batman were down. *Way* down. On the verge of cancellation down. If anyone could turn the tide, they reasoned, it was Julie Schwartz.



Although Schwartz was not well acquainted with Batman in 1964, he was certainly familiar with comics. Since joining DC (then National Periodical Publications) in 1944, he had edited a slew of Golden Age books (including *All-Star Comics*, which starred The Justice Society, *All-American Comics*, which starred Green Lantern and *All-Flash Comics*, which starred...oh, never mind). More recently—and more importantly—he helped to usher in what we call Comics' Silver Age.

"I revived The Flash, Green Lantern, and Hawkman," he notes, "in name only. Everything else was different, and they were a huge success." When the call came to take over Batman, Schwartz brought his recipe for success with him

"I said, 'Okay, I'll do *Batman*," Schwartz recalls, "'But I'll do him *my* way. I will make changes, as I did with Flash and Green Lantern.' And they agreed. They weren't even really concerned with what I was going to do. Can you imagine me trying to say that today?" He made his presence felt immediately by utilizing the dynamic artwork of long-time associates Carmine Infantino and Gil Kane. With inker Murphy Anderson, the four of them set out to create a new look for the Caped Crusader, starting with the front covers. "Please recall in those days magazines were sold only at newsstands," Schwartz notes, "and you were competing with literally hundreds of titles. The cover had to grab you, or the potential buyer would go on to something else. As a consequence, I'd do the covers first.

"The cover was very helpful," Schwartz adds. "Not only did we have a sure-selling magazine, so to speak, but when a writer came in to plot a story, we knew what the situation would be. We knew we had to get that scene into the story, and have it be a very dramatic moment."

One of Schwartz's most famous moves involved altering—albeit slightly—Batman's costume. "I decided to put a yellow circle on the Bat-symbol to remind me: This is what I do."

Schwartz's changes went beyond mere cosmetic alterations, however. "I wanted to do something really, really startling," he admits. "So I called in [long-time Batman writer] Bill Finger, and I persuaded him to do a Batman story. I think it was called 'Gotham Gang Lineup.'" The story was compelling enough, but the ending was a shocker: Alfred, Bruce's faithful butler, was killed after 20 years. "The reason behind it—how shall I put it?" Schwartz says "There was talk in those days about three males living in Wayne Manor. So I killed off Alfred and I brought in Aunt Harriet, and made her the aunt of Dick Grayson.

"Now that sounded great," Schwartz adds, "But it led to great difficulty later on when the ABC network wanted to do a *Batman* television series, and they were stunned to learn that Alfred was no longer alive!" It was strongly suggested that Schwartz bring Alfred back to life (turns out he wasn't really dead—he was trapped in the body of the villain Outsider), and then the **Batman** TV show was ready to fly.

Schwartz knew that "you can't argue with sales," and with the success of the TV show came a radical shift in direction for Batman: the crime drama that marked Schwartz's return were replaced with go-go checks on the covers. "Holy something-or-other!" in the dialogue. and an overall campy attitude. Diehard *Batman* fans shudder at the havoc wrought by the TV show, but the irony is that



wartz, by revitalizing the character, was indirectly responsible for the program's creation in the first place.

"The fact that I revived the villains," he says, "which Jack Schiff had neglected all those years, was what prompted William Dozier to get the wonderful, wild idea to do a *Batman* television series." After two years, however, both the show and the campy appeal of the books had played themselves out. Schwartz knew another change was needed, and he decided it was time to "redo *Batman* the way it used to be, with all the mysterious flavoring." Schwartz also decided to put new emphasis on making The Dark Knight Detective an actual detective. "We called him 'The World's Greatest Detective,' but we never saw him operating as such." Batman's long-time foes, such as Two-Face and The Joker, were still around to plague him, only now they were deadly, not comical.

With the new look came a new stable of writers and artists: Dick Giordano, Irv Novick, Frank Robbins, Len Wein, Jim Aparo, Archie Goodwin, Steve Englehart, Marshall Rogers. However, when fans of this period think of a writer-artist "team," the names that spring to mind are Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams. Adams' detailed, realistic look (abetted by Giordano's inks) was unusual for *Batman*, but Schwartz was impressed by Adams' work on another title, *The Brave & The Bold*. "I like the look of those," Schwartz says. "So I said 'How would you like Batman?' and it worked out."

"[Neal] and Denny got on exceptionally well," Schwartz notes. "It was very easy to plot stories with Denny; the only problem with Neal—and I hope he won't object when this



comes into print—he was a *bit late* sometimes." Late or not, the O'Neil-Adams *Batman* stories were an integral part of the character's history (in more ways than one—O'Neil became the editor of the Batman line in 1986, a position he holds to this day).

In the late 1970s, Schwartz left the Bat-books to concentrate solely on editing DC's Superman titles, a job he held until the character's "revamping" in 1986 (He had originally hoped that Superman's co-creator, Jerry Siegel, would write Schwartz's final *Superman*, but Siegel balked at signing the contract. Undaunted, Schwartz gave the job to Alan Moore). He's currently working on his memoirs with longtime *Superman* writer Elliot Maggin for *Amazing Stories* magazine. He still comes down to the DC offices now and then, although he admits he doesn't keep up with their output the way he used to: "No, I don't read comics now. Listen, I was reading them for 45 years!

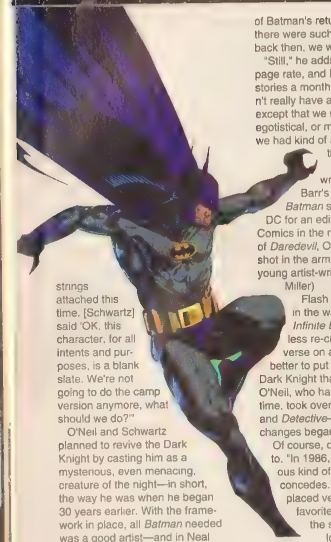
"I used to have a stock answer. I said, 'No, I don't read *Batman* or *Superman*. If I read the story and in my opinion, it's worse than the ones I ran, I feel bad. If it's *better* than the one I ran, I feel *twice* as bad!"

DENNY O'NEIL

As The Dark Knight's main writer in the '60s and '70s, and as his editor for the last seven years, Denny O'Neil has probably had a greater—certainly a more consistent—impact on the Batman legend than anyone over the last quarter-century. It's interesting then to note that when editor Julie Schwartz first offered O'Neil the chance to write *Batman*, he said no.

"It was still in the campy era," O'Neil offers for an explanation. "I don't make any judgments about that, except that I didn't think I was capable of doing it that well." Instead, O'Neil became a regular writer on *Green Lantern*, and, in his own words, "did a credible, but more importantly, a very *prompt* job on that," eventually using *Green Lantern* to usher in what might be called comics' "relevant age." When the *Batman* TV show was cancelled, Schwartz offered O'Neil the writing job once again, "but without any





strings attached this time. [Schwartz] said 'OK, this character, for all intents and purposes, is a blank slate. We're not going to do the camp version anymore, what should we do?'"

O'Neil and Schwartz planned to revive the Dark Knight by casting him as a mysterious, even menacing, creature of the night—in short, the way he was when he began 30 years earlier. With the framework in place, all *Batman* needed was a good artist—and in Neal Adams, they found a *great* one.

"The question I'm probably most often asked is 'What was it like working with Neal Adams?'" O'Neil says. "Damned if I know. I wasn't working *with* anybody. We didn't think in those terms. I got an assignment from an editor, and went home and wrote a script, and a week later I brought it in and presumably got another script." Bloodless as it might sound, O'Neil and Adams (with inker Dick Giordano) pulled off a series of classic Bat-stories that have become standard-bearers for the next generation of writers.

"We were aware that we were pushing the envelope," O'Neil says of Batman's return to grim glory. "If there were such things as 'stars' back then, we were it.

"Still," he adds, "we worked for page rate, and I still had to write four stories a month to break even. It didn't really have any effect on our lives, except that we maybe got a little egotistical, or maybe we realized that we had kind of accomplished something."

O'Neil wrote, by writer-historian Mike Barr's estimation, "84 or 85 *Batman* stories" before he left DC for an editor's post at Marvel Comics in the mid-70s (as the editor of *Daredevil*, O'Neil gave that title a shot in the arm by working with a young artist-writer named Frank Miller).

Flash forward to 1986: DC, in the wake of *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, was more or less re-creating their entire universe on a blank slate. Who better to put a new imprint on The Dark Knight than Denny O'Neil? O'Neil, who had left Marvel by this time, took over as editor on *Batman* and *Detective*—and once again, the changes began.

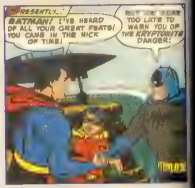
Of course, once again, they *had* to. "In 1986, *Batman* was in a curious kind of doldrums," O'Neil concedes. "The character usually placed very high on fan polls of favorite characters, and yet, the sales were really pretty low. So I thought my first priority was to send a message to the audience that there was new stuff happening over at *Batman* and *Detective*. I got lucky in that [Frank] Miller and [David] Mazzuchelli were already working on 'Batman: Year One.'"

O'Neil's first year was not all smooth sailing, by any means. His first group of writers and artists (including Barr, Alan Davis, Max Allen Collins, and even Todd McFarlane) were gone from the books within a year, and the re-introduction of Jason Todd—the second Robin—had gone from being a fresh start to becoming, in O'Neil's words, "a liability."

"I don't know why," O'Neil says, "but Jason had evolved into kind of a disagreeable character. He wasn't popular with the readers, as far as we could tell. He wasn't really popular with us."

At a company retreat, O'Neil risked becoming the William Castle of comics by proposing that readers decide whether or not to kill Jason by casting votes via a 1-900 number. The response was tremendous, and O'Neil admits "there were times in the ensuing six months where I really wished I'd kept my mouth shut"—especially when the fans finally voted to kill Jason, and O'Neil found himself defending his brainstorm to everyone from comics fanzines to *USA Today*. "It was educational and painful," O'Neil recalls. "People were calling it a 'Roman circus.' I wanted to say 'Look, you're behaving as though I killed a kid! This is paper and ink, folks, not human flesh!'

"On the other hand," O'Neil adds, "the vehemence of the response made me realize that I'm not just telling stories. These characters are folklore. They've been around so long, and so pervasively, that even if you've never read a comic, you know Batman and Robin. That kind



of recast is what I do; I don't think of myself as just a guy who tells a bunch of stories anymore."

The "Death In The Family" story also taught O'Neil the importance of testing a character's limits by shaking things up now and again. He and his staff have done that with "Knightfall," the current multi-part saga which has broken Bruce



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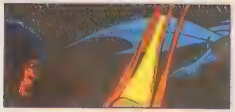


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ATMAN
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DICK SPRANG

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work, and I now am sophisticated enough to know what a fine draftsman he is. When I can get him to do something I certainly never miss that opportunity."

In that respect, not a lot has changed for Dick Sprang since he began drawing comics in 1941: back then, his editors never missed an opportunity either. "I got a kick when [former editor] Jack Schiff came to visit two years ago," Sprang says, "and the first words he said to my wife were 'You know, when I had a rush job, I wouldn't give to those New York artists. I'd send it to Dick out in Arizona, because I knew I'd get it done on time.' Well, listen, that's the best compliment I ever got!"

Born in Ohio, Sprang originally had ambitions to become an illustrator for *Collier's*, *The Post*, and so on. We all did." The economic realities of the Depression dictated otherwise, however, and Sprang became a freelancer, performing a variety of jobs which included drawing and writing for the pulp magazines of the day. Eventually, he says, "I saw that the comics were crowding out the pulps, and I realized I had to go somewhere else." He decided to give comics a try, so he put together a few samples, and—quite arbitrarily—took them to National Comics [known today, of course, as DC] Editor Whitney Ellsworth ("A splendid man," Sprang says) auditioned this new artist by asking him to re-interpret three pages of a previously published *Batman* story.



"I took them back [three days later]," Sprang recalls, "and he looked at them, not too rapidly, not too slowly." Ellsworth was impressed enough to give Sprang a check and a brand-new 13-page story. "He said 'I like the way you interpret a script—and you get the work in on time."

When Sprang began drawing *Batman*, he brought his own style and sensibilities to the job, which ended up practically re-inventing the characters. "I think what I did deliberately, and maybe it was just part of my style, was to make Batman a bit more fluid. I widened his waist a little bit; I shortened his ears, and I made him more athletic." Sprang gave Batman one more distinctive feature: one of the sharpest jaws in comics history. The result was a look that transformed Bob Kane's original "Sherlock Holmes meets Douglas Fairbanks" idea from a concept into full-blown reality.

"Well, I was a movie buff," Sprang admits when discussing the book's visual influences. "I really soaked up the movie technique, and I've always used that. These stories were action stories, or at least they were supposed to be. You had a discipline there that was necessary.

"For instance, if I got a story that had a lot of dialogue in successive panels—say, three successive panels of talking heads—what are you gonna do? What I would do is vary

the scene in each one...something to remove the static boredom of just talking heads. Then in action scenes, I'd visualize my grouping as on a legitimate stage. In all of this moving around, you try to bring a rhythm into the way you draw the continuity of action and setting."



One person who understood Sprang's notions of staging and pacing was longtime Bat-writer Bill Finger, whom Sprang considers "the best comic writer *ever*." Originally, Ellsworth offered Sprang the chance to draw and write *Batman*. "Well, no way," Sprang says with a laugh "With guys like Bill Finger around? When a guy far more skilled than I is providing the scripts, I tip my hat to him and give thanks for the opportunity of portraying *his* concepts.

"Bill and I shared a common visual sense," he adds. "His invigorated mine, which inspired him to increase his when he knew I'd be given the script. We made a team." Abetted by the light touch of editor Ellsworth, Sprang was able to respond to Finger's challenges. At one point Finger upped the ante by writing a fight scene set amidst a roomful of gigantic props. The motif went on to become an inextricable part of the character; so much so, in fact, that it's easy to forget that unlike later Bat-artists, Sprang had no precedent for drawing such a scene.

"It was a surprise," he recalls with a laugh. "I imagine the first time I encountered it, I was a bit appalled, but I tried to work it out. I always loved the challenge. And of course, they found out I could do those giant things, so they socked me with them!"

One reason Sprang thinks he was able to rise to this challenge is the fact that his father was an electrical and mechanical engineer. "From him I learned the principles of mechanical movement, so when one of these giant figures or machines with moving parts would come along, I could make them articulate (what I think was) authentically."

Authenticity was a vital ingredient in Sprang's stories, particularly those where the Dynamic Duo would go back in time to mete out justice. "Whit said, 'Okay, the kids are reading this,'" Sprang notes. "We're back in ancient Rome. I want it to *be* ancient Rome. I want it to *look* ancient Rome.' Of course, bless Whit for that. He felt a great responsibility to his audience.

"I just loved to do the research on historical stuff: horsegear, weaponry, architecture and all that, and it was fun," he continues. "It taught me something, too. And Bill, bless his heart, he'd enclose tear sheets from magazines and so on, anything from his files that would illustrate what he had in mind to help me in my research. So that was another thing that was so darned appreciated by those who were lucky enough to work on his scripts.

"I've illustrated many, many scripts, and a lot of writers, but Bill was my favorite," Sprang says, a little sadly "And you know, I never even knew the guy. Never even met him. That's too bad."

In the 1950s, Sprang went to work on *World's Finest*, which teamed Batman and Robin with Superman. "Of course, that presented all kinds of challenges," he says, "but Mort [Weisinger, long-time editor of the Superman titles] was sure good at inventing that stuff. I enjoyed Superman because of his ability for this great movement, dramatic flying around, beating mountains all to hell."

Sprang retired from comics in 1961, although he's been far from idle in recent years. For several years he's been selling original paintings based on his famous *Batman* artwork, and over the last few years, Denny O'Neil has taken the opportunity to ask Sprang to do a few new illustrations (most recently, he drew the covers for the upcoming *Two-Face Strikes Twice* mini-series).

"[Batman's] goals were simple, and his method of fighting crime was brainy as well as physical," Sprang notes. "Batman wasn't just some macho hero, battling his way through a mob of dumb crooks; his ability resided in the use of his intellect and his athletic talent."

It was Dick Sprang's ability, however, that helped to transform Batman from a costumed vigilante into a cultural icon.

MOLDOFF

For more than fifty years, Batman has been known as one hero who's quite content to stay in the shadows. If there was ever an artist who was content to be in Batman's shadow, it would be Sheldon "Shelly" Moldoff. He worked with Bob Kane at two different stages of the Caped Crusader's career, but it wasn't until those tours of duty were long done that his work on *Batman* and *Detective* was recognized.

Born in New York City in 1920, Moldoff was a self-taught artist, still in his teens when he met another New Yorker named Bob Kane. "Someone said he knew Bob Kane,



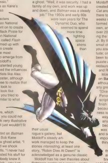
had just started *Batman*," Moldoff recalls, "and he was looking for someone to do backgrounds, lettering, etc. So I got on a trolley and went over to see him, and I worked with him at the very beginning. That was part of my career, and a big part of it on." Indeed.

Moldoff notes that "from the beginning, Batman started to take off very quickly, but nobody knew that he would be one of the top heroes fifty years later. Nobody had any idea it would become a classic."

After a few months as Kane's assistant, Moldoff was given the chance to create his own characters for DC (then known as National Periodicals), and went on to create the swashbuckling Black Pirate for *Action Comics*. When National launched a new book called *Flash Comics*, Moldoff teamed up with writer Gardner Fox to create Hawkman, one of the most famous characters to emerge from either gentleman. Moldoff's Hawkman shows a talented young man who had digested the influences of adventure-strip artists like Alex Raymond and Hal Foster, although he had the good sense to realize that he couldn't give that look to Batman: "It wouldn't look like Batman. In that day, you tried to keep [a strip] very similar to what it was when it originated, and through the years it did evolve, which comes naturally. But you could not suddenly make it look very illustrative like Alex Raymond. It just wouldn't fit the character."

Moldoff's second stint on *Batman* came in 1953, when Bob Kane offered him a job as a ghost artist. "I said 'Okay, Bob,' and we shook hands," Moldoff recalls. "I never had a contract, and I ghosted his stuff for fifteen years. And nobody knew it. That was part of my job—you just don't say anything." The irony was that while Moldoff was working as a ghost, "[Editor] Jack Schiff started giving me work. I was doing a lot of other things for National [including *House of Mystery*, *Blackhawk*, and *Sea Devils*], and nobody knew I was doing *Batman*. Sometimes I'd meet Bob Kane in the office there, we'd say 'Hello,' shake hands, and that was it!" Some years later, he adds, Julius Schwartz (who edited the Batman titles in the late 1960s), introduced Moldoff at a convention by saying he'd always wanted to work with him; years later, Schwartz continued, he found out he'd *been* working with him.

"People ask, 'Why did you do that?'" Moldoff says of his career as a ghost. "Well, it was security. I had a family of my own, and work was up and down, and *Batman* was a steady job." The 1950s and early 60s were lean years for The Dynamic Duo, who seemed to spend more time fighting space aliens than their usual rogue's gallery, but Moldoff's steady artwork managed to keep the stories interesting; at least one story, "Robin Dies At Dawn!" is acknowledged as a genuine classic.



Moldoff has his own theories about Batman's continual success—particularly at a time when the Comics Code was killing off books left and right. "One of the main things that kept Batman sustained were the different villains. And they weren't terrible villains; they always came back, like Sherlock Holmes' Moriarty. He would best them, and then The Joker would live to return another day." Of course, one of the other things that sustained *Batman* through the years was the inventive writing of Bill Finger. "Bill Finger [was a] very prolific writer, great ideas," Moldoff agrees, "and I think his name should have been up there, too, from the very beginning."

Moldoff ghosted on *Batman* and *Detective* until 1967, when Kane left the book and went into animation. Moldoff followed suit, and when Kane created a cartoon called *Courageous Cat and Minute Mouse*, Shelly was there to write and storyboard 13 weeks worth of episodes. Later, he formed a production company of his own, and has gone on to produce over 200 short animated films, including the full-length feature *Marco Polo, Jr.* By the way, if you've ever taken a small child out to dinner, odds are you also owe Moldoff a debt of gratitude; one of his other sidelines has been to produce comic books and puzzle-and-game placemats for restaurants, including Bob's Big Boy and Red Lobster

Moldoff is pleased that his work on **Batman** is remembered, although he doesn't really harbor any great sentimentality for it: "[Drawing Batman] was a job Period. It was a job to pick up the script, break it down, pencil it out, finish it, get it back to them on time, because the very nature of the business is deadlines. But along the way, I never really stopped to say anything about them—maybe because my name wasn't on it. It was more or less a secret identity, and so I didn't tack that much importance to it. I didn't say anything, and I did the stories.

"It wasn't until after I was through," he adds, "that historians made it their business to find out and give proper credits, and I think we have to be grateful to those fellows. People have told me that over the last few years, I've gotten a certain spirit in my step, and I think it's largely because of the increase in recognition."

It took a long time, but Shelly Moldoff is finally out of the shadows.

No one likes surprises...



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THE BATMAN HALL-OF-FAME

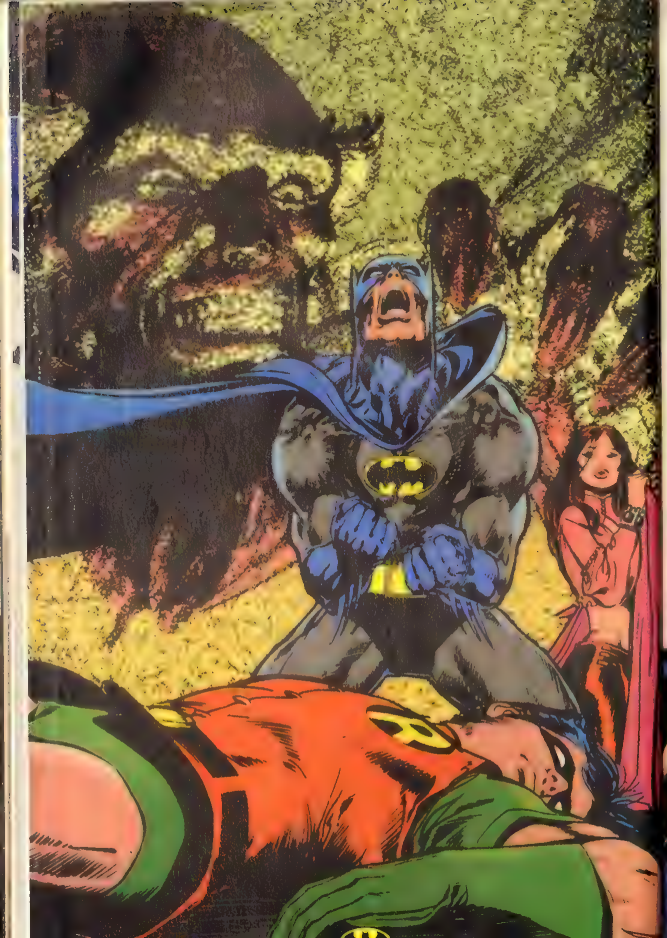
THE TOP TEN ARTISTS WHO INJECTED LIFE INTO A COMIC AND CREATED A CULTURAL ICON

Few pieces of literature last for over 50 years. Of course, every generation will have a Hemingway, Twain, Shelly, Shakespeare; but this represents a miniscule portion of all of the writers in the world. The same holds true for art. For every Rembrandt there are a million artists lost amidst the sands of time. And when you really think about it, there are even fewer characters that qualify in this same "immortal" category. This makes comic book characters like Batman seem marvelous to say the least. What is that certain something that makes a character endure through three-wars and technological advances that have put man on the moon and brought a zillion channels of easy entertainment right into our living rooms?

At least fifty-percent of the credit must go to the artists. (The other half to the writers.) And Batman has had a ton of good artists. These are our pick of the top ten, based on style and innovation. Our choices here are purely subjective, and are not to take any of the credit away from others like Jim Aparo who draws such a wonderful Dark Knight or Charles Paris who inked the Caped Crusader for more years than most people stick with a career. They all contributed to transforming this drawing of pencil, ink, and paint into a living, breathing creation.

So while we have only noted a few, we at HERO would like to thank them all, for giving us fifty-plus wonderful years in the presence of greatness.

By Joe Desris



NEAL ADAMS

AFTER THE BUBBLEGUM ERA WAS OVER, ADAMS BROUGHT A NEW LEVEL OF ARTISTIC DETAIL AND REALISM TO DC COMICS.

In a 1983 interview with Will [illegible]er, Neal Adams recalled his early [illegible]s at DC Comics: "At that time, Batman was treated like a cartoon; they were still doing stories similar to that of the *Batman* TV show. So I [illegible]ted by asking editor [Murray [illegible]noff] if, instead of having a [illegible]sequence take place in the daytime, having it take place at night. I said Batman is supposed to be a creature of the night. To have a guy in that outfit walking around during the [illegible] to me, seemed silly. He'd okay [illegible]. After awhile, I got to the point where I didn't feel close to [writer] Bob Haney's stuff, and I asked the editor if I could make changes."

Born June 6, 1941, on Governor's [illegible]nd in New York, Adams attended [illegible] York's School of Industrial Arts. He began working in comics in 1959, his first assignment appearing in [illegible]'s *Joke Book Magazine*. He [illegible]ed Howard Nostrand on the [illegible]klasterson newspaper strip [illegible]veral weeks that same year. Adams then began to freelancing advertising art, ultimately working at Johnstone and Cushing in 1960 on various commercial advertising comic books and strips for Esso Oil, AT&T, Time Magazine, and Avon among others. He illustrated the *Ben Casey* syndicated newspaper strip from beginning to end (Nov. 26, 1962 to July 31, 1966). Simultaneously, he had been working on storyboards and continued this after Casey was canceled. Adams then assisted or ghosted on *Peter Scratch* (1966), *Juliet Jones*, *Secret Agent Corrigan* (1967) and *Rip Kirby* (1968).

Joining DC in 1967, he illustrated numerous covers throughout approximately four years. His art graced the covers of nearly every DC title, including *Action Comics*, *Adventure Comics*, *The Adventures of Bob Hope*, *Flash*, *From Beyond the Unknown*, *G.I. Combat*, *The Phantom Stranger*, *The Spectre*, *Superboy*, *Superman* and *Young Romance* to name a few. He also did many of the stories.

His first major job at DC was Deadman, beginning in *Strange Adventures* #206 (Nov. 1967), however this point in his career is most often remembered for his highly successful redefining of Batman. Adams' realistic style and dynamic composition redefined a post-TV era Gotham Detective, appearing in *Batman*, *The Brave and The Bold* and *Detective Comics* all too enthusiastic fan response. His first contact with the Darknight Detective was *World's Finest Comics* #175 (May 1968).

Working with writer Denny O'Neil, Adams also illustrated the acclaimed *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* title beginning with issue #76 (April 1970). Adams rendered at least one issue during the run completely sans ink, using only highly detailed pencils.

He has also worked for Marvel (X-Men, Avengers, Conan, Solomon Kane, Thor, Man-Thing, Inhumans), Warren, Charlton (Six Million Dollar Man), and National Lampoon.

In 1971, Adams formed Continuity Associates with Dick Giordano Comic book assignments comprised a significant portion of the early days but they soon were busy with TV storyboards, illustration, package design, movie posters, and other commercial advertising art such as Peter Pan/Power Records album covers and comics plus work for Corgi, Burger King, and Hertz Rent-A-Car. Continuity now publishes comics as well.

During the 1970s, Adams battled the comics industry regarding the return of artwork, reprint fees, creator's rights, and the elimination of the work-for-hire clause in contracts, the latter remaining a standard practice even until the early 1980s.

Generally, his efforts paid off and the industry has become a friendlier place to work.



DICK GIORDANO

BEFORE BECOMING ONE OF DC'S MAIN MEN, DICK GIORDANO HELPED BRING THE *DARK* BACK INTO THE DARK KNIGHT.

Dick Giordano was born July 20, 1932, in New York. He was a fan of comics and of Batman from an early age. His father brought home various titles (including Detective Comics) to help his son pass the time he spent at home in bed, a victim of severe asthma attacks. Giordano once recalled that he "had been drawing ever since I could remember," and at age 13, decided to become a cartoonist.

He graduated from Manhattan's School of Industrial Arts, then apprenticed for nine months at Jerry Iger's studio beginning in March 1952. He inked backgrounds and did cleanup on Fiction House's Sheena and Wings Comics at 75 cents per hour. Beginning in 1953, he freelanced for Charlton Comics. He illustrated crime comics at Lev Gleason (1955) as well as some material at Marvel (1957) and for Treasure Chest (1962). He worked at Dell from 1962-66, including *The Lieutenant*, *Nukla*, *Flying Saucers*, and *Hogan's Heroes* and did some material at Tower in 1966.

Giordano became Charlton's Managing Editor in 1965 where he worked on various titles. He added superheroes such as The Question, Captain Atom and Steve Ditko's The Blue Beetle.

He joined DC in 1967, bringing along writer Dennis O'Neil and artists Jim Aparo and Pat Boyette. Giordano become editor of *Aquaman*, *The Secret Six*, *The Creeper*, *Blackhawk* plus *The Hawk And The Dove*. His first work as an artist in Batman was also his first association with penciler Neal Adams, a two-part story beginning in *World's Finest Comics* #175 (May 1968). O'Neil, Adams and Giordano returned Batman to the creature of the night concept, this after several years of a campier Batman. Giordano not only inked many of Adams' Batman stories and covers, but continued to ink additional Batman material for years to come.

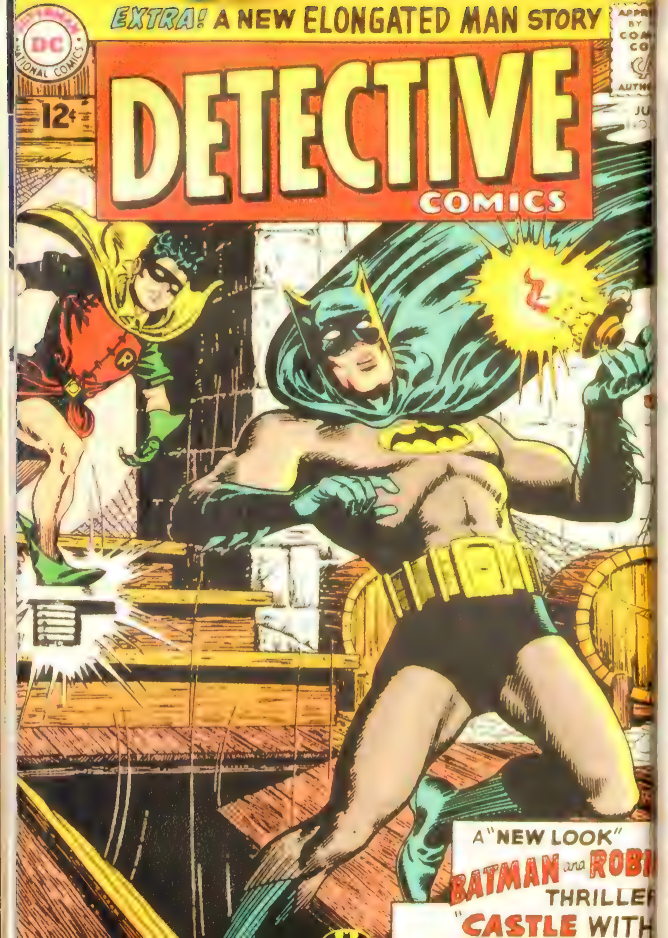


He also helped bring relevance to the pages of DC in the award-winning Green Lantern/Green Arrow series, beginning with issue #76 (April 1970). Giordano left DC in late November 1969, freelanced for about one year, and then linked up with Neal Adams to form Continuity Associates, a commercial advertising group, in 1971.

He did some work for Archie and Marvel and worked on the *Superman vs. The Amazing Spider-Man* team-up among other projects. One of his favorite efforts was the penciling, inking and tone work he did for Marvel's *Dracula Lives!* magazine, an adaptation of Dracula by Roy Thomas.

He officially left Continuity in 1977 and formed his own commercial art company, Dik-Art Inc. Illustrations for Mego toys, art for Peter Pan records (including Batman) as well as other commercial work followed Giordano returned to DC in October 1980. He has worked on Wonder Woman, Elongated Man, *World of Krypton*, *Human Target*, *Justice League of America*, *Rose and Thorn*, *Vigilante*, *Atom*, Flash, Joker, Kobra, Isis and many other DC titles and characters as well as having done commercial work and style guide art. He developed the Batman logo design in which the letters of the word Batman form the shape of a bat.

Giordano eventually became Vice President/Editorial Director. However, he resigned his position this past June. He will continue to do work for DC as well as now being able to devote more time to Dik-Art Inc., with some assistance from Pat Bastienne.



CARMINE INFANTINO

CARMINE INFANTINO IS THE FATHER OF THE SECOND BATMAN — THE ONE FROM THE EARLY '60S ON, IN A PLACE CALLED EARTH 2.

"I never liked drawing Batman," Carmine Infantino once asserted. "It's weird, but the ones I'm best known for, I never liked drawing. Adam Strange didn't thrill me. Flash was a tough one and I never liked westerns. [I liked] Detective Chimp, but who remembers it? I enjoyed those Strange Sports Stories I did with Julie. They were tough but they were fun."

Born May 24, 1925, in Brooklyn, NY, Infantino attended the Art Students League, the School of Industrial Arts, and Queens College. His first professional comic book assignment was Jack Frost, a collaboration with friend and inker Frank Giacoia for Timely's USA Comics in 1942. Infantino then worked in the Binder Shop from 1942-43 and the Baily Shop circa 1945. His work appeared in books published by Timely (*The Human Torch, Horror*), Fawcett, Street and Smith, Lev Gleason, Holyoke, Aviatin Press, Hillman (*The Flying Dutchman, The Heap*), Price, St. John (1950-53) and Ziff Davis.

His first work for the DC Comics line came in 1947, illustrating the *Ghost Patrol* backup feature in Flash Comics. Infantino also penciled the original Flash, Green Lantern and Black Canary as well as Johnny Thunder, King Farraday, Boy Commandos, Pow-Wow Smith (Detective Comics), chapters of the Justice Society of America, Trigger Twins, The Phantom Stranger, Gang Busters, Silent Knight, Chris KL-99, Charlie Chan, A-Man, and various SF stories such as *Space Museum* (for Strange Adventures). He also drew Detective Chimp (for *Rex, The Wonder Dog*) and Strange Sports Stories (for *The Brave And The Bold*). A 1950s issue of Avon's Jesse James has Infantino's pencils with inking by Joe Kubert.

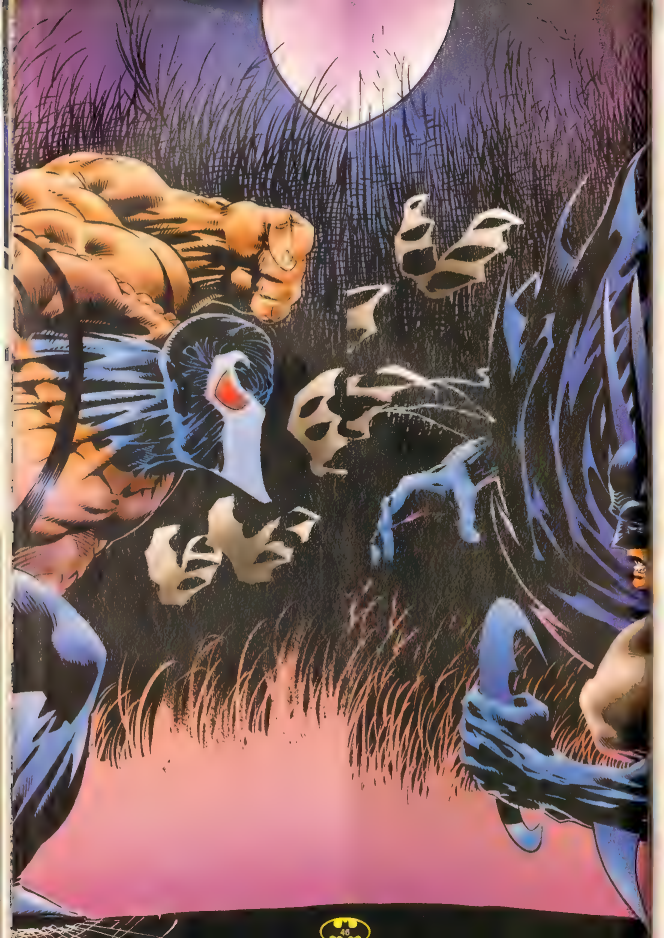
Infantino ghosted one Phantom Sunday (Sept. 24, 1961), a week of Flash Gordon and briefly assisted Irwin Hasen on *Dondi*. He scripted a "young Tor" sequence for a potential newspaper strip around 1959, but apparently the strip was not picked up. He also illustrated an issue of *Charlie Chan* for Dell in 1965.

Some of Infantino's most famous work occurred throughout the 1960s. He penciled Flash, Adam Strange and Elongated Man (Detective Comics). He drew the first Deadman story in *Strange Adventures* #205. The first issue of DC Special (October-November 1968) was an all-Infantino issue, acknowledging his popularity. And when editor Julie Schwartz took over the Batman titles late in 1963, he called on Infantino to help establish a "new look" for the comic book stories. It was indeed a new look with a thinner Batman, a sleeker Batmobile and Infantino's trademark architecture, all very slick and well-received by fans. This material was often inked by either Joe Giella or Sid Greene.



Infantino worked on the Sunday version of the 1960s Batman newspaper strip from Sept. 4 - Oct. 16, 1966. He was given fewer comic book assignments later in 1966 because it was felt that his abilities could be better utilized in other ways. This included a series of six Batman and Robin posters, ads for tires, packaging for licensed products, etc., work typically inked by Murphy Anderson.

Infantino became DC's Art Director, then Editorial Director around 1967, publisher in 1971, and was president/publisher from 1972 until 1976. He then returned to freelancing and his work occasionally appeared in comics and other commercial endeavors. He began penciling the syndicated Batman newspaper strip as of Jan. 22, 1990, carrying through until the feature's 1991 demise. Infantino also helped found the Academy of Comic Book Arts.



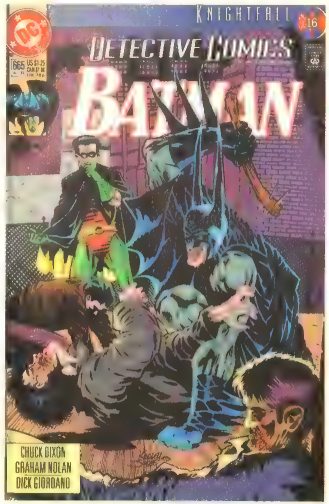
KELLEY JONES

WHILE BEING A RELATIVE NEWCOMER TO DRAWING BATMAN, KELLEY JONES BRINGS HIS OWN FLAIR OF STYLE AND ORIGINALITY.

"He was a supernatural superhero to me," observes Kelley Jones regarding Batman, "although he didn't have supernatural powers. He got around that alley somehow and he knew the entire layout of the sewer system of Gotham City — somehow. He knew how to get through everything, how to pop any lock. He knew when to be quiet and sneaky and not just crash through the window. I love that. There's no character better than Batman and there's none that works as well as he does. So to screw up Batman, you have to go a long way. You have to think of him as a superhero. Like Captain America with a shield, and he's not. So as long as I keep that in my head, he's a blast to draw. If you can draw, you can do Batman. That's why so many different versions can work on him and he always seems to be Batman."

Jones followed comics and cartoons as a kid, later taking figure drawing and film courses in school. He planned to be a history and anthropology major, not a comic book artist, citing movies as significant to his development. Fritz Lang, Stanley Kubrick, the Universal monster movies, plus Hammer and Roger Corman films as well as atmospheric film noir all were influential to him from an artistic standpoint.

His first professional work appeared anonymously in *The Defenders #116* (February 1983) where he inked five pages. Other assignments followed, although his career took off following his work on *Deadman*. He also worked on *Sandman*, *Aliens: Hive*, and he penciled *Batman and Dracula Red Rain* in (1991).



His cover for *Detective Comics #651* led to his recent work on Knightfall (the design originally was Jones' unused cover to *Red Rain*). Subsequently, what was planned to be just three covers turned into a series of *Batman* and *Detective Comics* covers. Jones is currently working on a project for Dark Horse. He will also do a sequel to *Red Rain* and then undertake an Elseworlds monthly with Batman in near future.

"For me, it's always the atmosphere," says Jones, explaining his covers. "And every cover has to ask questions and it has to give information. I did one with all these rats on his head. That really wasn't in there but he did get into a sequence where he was in a chamber filling up [with] water. I thought, well, you know, you see that all the time. But if I put rats on his head, that gives it that much more claustrophobic sense. Hey, I just want to get people to look at the book. There're 400 books coming out a month. Even if they don't buy it, I want people to look at it and register the word Batman in their head, whether they read it or see it. That way he becomes a player. My second agenda is it's got to register as my drawing, as it's my spirit on the book. If I've done that, then I've satisfied the commercial end of it and the critical end of it."



BOB KANE

BOB KANE IS THE FATHER OF BATMAN, AND SOMEONE WHO DESERVES TREMENDOUS RECOGNITION FOR THE YEARS SPENT WITH HIM.



"When Vincent Sullivan, the editor, said to me, 'Why don't you come up with another superhero?' " says Bob Kane, recalling Batman's origins, "that's when I decided to make the transition to the illustrative style of drawing. I was basically a slapstick cartoonist when I started Batman, versus being an illustrative cartoonist, like [Alex Raymond]. I made a transition during the first six months [of Batman]. However, I never wanted to make Batman *too* illustrative. I wanted it more like Dick Tracy, so my Batman art always had the flavor of semi-comic art."

Born in the Bronx, New York, Kane has referred to himself as a "compulsive doodleholic" and "a great copy cat." At age 15, he entered a contest to copy characters from the *Just Kids* newspaper comic strip and won second prize: the original art for a *Just Kids* daily. In 1936, Kane penciled and inked his first comic book work, Hiram Hick, which appeared in *Wow What a Magazine!* #3 (September 1936).

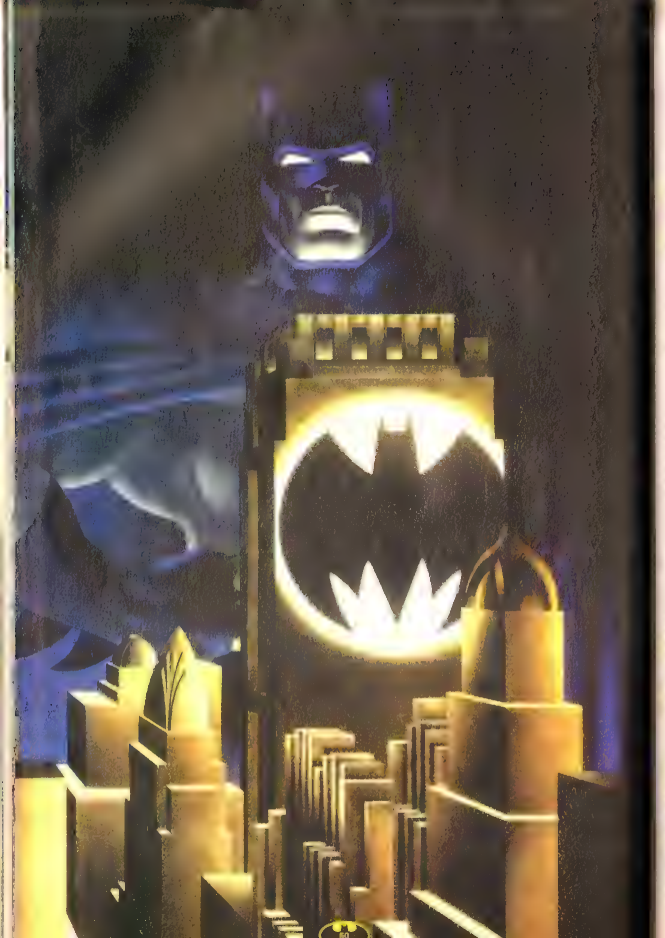
Working as a staff artist for the Eisner/Iger studio, Kane's first adventure strip, "The Case of the Missing Heir," appeared in *Detective Picture Stories* #5 (April 1937). He continued working on humor material, selling short fillers to DC Comics beginning in 1938, including: *Jest a Second*, *Oscar the Gumshoe*, and *Professor Doolittle*.

Also in 1938, Kane met writer Bill Finger at a party, and they soon were collaborating on comic book submissions. *Rusty and His Pals* was followed by *Clip Carson, Soldier of Fortune*. Their most famous effort, Batman, first appeared in *Detective Comics* #27 (May 1939). Throughout the earliest adventures of the Gotham Guardian, Kane was penciling stories and covers as well as doing significant amounts of inking. As Batman's popularity demanded more material, Kane kept up the pace by adding assistants and dropping non-Batman efforts.

Beginning in 1943, Kane halted his regular drawing of comic books to concentrate on penciling the daily *Batman and Robin* newspaper strip. He also penciled three Sunday continuities. After the strip's 1946 demise, Kane returned to illustrating Batman's comic book adventures, and with the help of several ghosts, including Lew Sayre Schwartz and Sheldon Moldoff, he remained involved with comics until retiring in 1968.

Kane developed the anthropomorphic Batman and Robin parody, *Courageous Cat And Minute Mouse*, which premiered in September 1960. This animated series consisted of 130 five-minute episodes. *Cool McCool*, his second animated show, premiered Sept. 10, 1966. A half-hour parody of secret agents, it utilized 20 six-minute episodes, recycling them until 1969.

In 1966, the popularity of the *Batman* television series offered Kane and his art worldwide recognition. His initial exhibition of paintings at New York's Gallerie Internationale in 1969 was followed over the years by a number of one-man art shows in galleries and museums nationwide. He released a series of five limited-edition lithographs in 1978 and another group in 1989. He served as a consultant on the 1989 *Batman* movie and an autobiography, *Batman and Me*, was published in 1989 by Eclipse Books and is currently in print.



FRANK MILLER

FRANK MILLER, RESPONSIBLE FOR *THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS* BOOKS, IS SHOWING WHERE THE FUTURE MAY LEAD FOR BATMAN.

e completely reworked Batman for the needs of the modern world," Frank Miller said in a 1986 interview *...ing Stone*, regarding his work on Dark Knight, "though in a way he's not so different than the man he ...rted out as in 1939. Batman only makes sense as a response to the world being a basically screwed-up place, where all the wrong people are in charge and justice is not served. I think that idea lines up perfectly ... our sense of the world at pre... I decided Batman would clearly ... vigilante, that he would clearly ... breaking the law in every single ...g he does and that there would ... real malice in his actions."

...rn in 1957, Miller freelanced various comic book work around New York for several years in the 1970s including *Peter Parker, The Spectacular ...er-Man*. He moved from Vermont to Manhattan at age 22 and began penciling *Daredevil* for Marvel. He was soon writing for the series as ... Some of this work was com... in *The Elektra Saga* (1984). He ...rew the 1982 *Wolverine* mini-...

...983, he wrote and illustrated ... a six-part series for DC ...es about samurai honor and a ...ng future society.

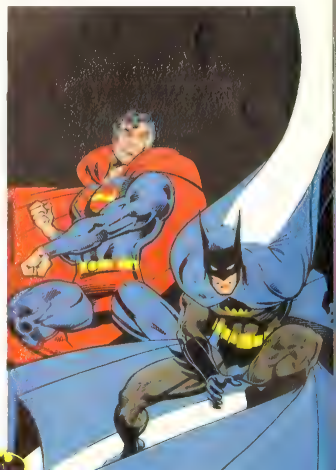
His first Batman assignment was penciling "Wanted: Santa Claus Dead or Alive" (DC Special Series #21, Spring 1980). However his best-known work to date for the Gotham ...lian was writing and penciling ...n: The Dark Knight*, a four-part graphic novel first published in ... 1986. The story was inked by ... Janson and colored by Lynn ...

...t in a bleak near-future with an ...tially retired 50-year- old Bruce ...e, this critically acclaimed series established fashionably darker tones for Batman which still remain in vogue today. Miller, DC, and Batman received nationwide press coverage for *Dark Knight*, making it both a creative and commercial success. The story saw several printings in its original form as well as in a softcover (with eight printings) and hardcover. The series also spawned a series of parodies/rip-offs/homages from other publishers.

Miller followed up *Dark Knight* by writing *Batman: Year One* (*Batman* #404-407, 1987), another successful series that saw a hardbound compilation plus three printings in a trade paperback format.

"For me Batman was never funny,' Miller wrote in *Batman: Year One*. "I was eight years old when I picked up an 80-page annual from the shelf of a local supermarket. The artwork on one story looked good and scary. Gotham City was cold shafts of concrete lit by cold moonlight, windswept and bottomless, fading to a cloud bank of city lights, a wet, white mist, miles below me." Miller's *Santa Claus, Dark Knight*, and *Year One* work was also collected in a hardbound volume.

He wrote *Elektra: Assassin*, an eight-part series for Marvel from 1987. Miller collaborated with Geof Darrow on 1990's *Hard Boiled* for Dark Horse (recently compiled as a softbound). He also worked on the screenplay for the 1992 theatrical release *RoboCop 2* and the upcoming *RoboCop 3*. Future projects: a six-issue *Sin City* series and *Daredevil: Man Without Fear*, a projected five-part limited series from Marvel.





JERRY ROBINSON

FROM THE SCHOOL OF CLASSIC BATMAN ARTISTS, ROBINSON BROUGHT A CLEAN AND SMOOTH ART STYLE TO THE CHARACTER.

Bob had just started Batman," recalls Jerry Robinson, "and it hadn't really taken off to that extent yet, so he had to do those other features to keep busy and make a living. We were doing the three: *Batman*, *Clip Carson*, and *Rusty and His Pals* for a good couple months as I recall, before Batman took off. Then he dropped the others to concentrate on Batman."

It was around October 1939 when a 17-year- old Robinson, studying creative writing at Columbia University, began assisting Bob Kane. Robinson worked on *Rusty and His Pals* and *Clip Carson, Soldier of Fortune* plus lettering and inking backgrounds on *Batman*. The Caped Crusader's earliest adventures showcase Kane's penciling, page layouts and composition. But by 1942, an unprecedented realism and fluidity was seen more frequently on Batman, thanks to Robinson's increased solo efforts and his facile brush (of particular note: covers to *Detective Comics* #71, #76). Without Kane's stiffer figures and repetitive poses lying underneath the inks, Robinson's more realistically illustrative style was in full bloom by late-1942. He was even completely penciling, inking, and coloring some stories and covers for *Batman* and *Detective Comics*. Robinson's early work is steadily being made more accessible by DC Comics as they reprint the material in their Archives series. Robinson's premise and creation of Joker and his contributions to the visualization of Robin proved to be significant events in Batman's history. He also illustrated "The Adventures of Alfred," a series of 13 solo stories featuring the famous butler which appeared in *Batman* #22–#36.

Robinson's credits are lengthy and diverse. They include comic book work on *Vigilante*, *Johnny Quick*, *The Fighting Yank*, *The Black Terror*, *Rocky* and *Bullwinkle*, *Lassie*, and *Bat Masterson*, as well as science fiction, crime, war, western, and other subjects. He created and illustrated various syndicated newspaper features (including *Jet Scott*) and has taught and lectured on graphic journalism at the School of Visual Arts and The New School of Social Research in New York.

Robinson is the only past president of both the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists and the National Cartoonists Society, having also been awarded three Reubens by the NCS. He has written several books, including *The Comics* and a biography, *Percy Crosby and Skippy*, while illustrating over 30 others. He was co-writer and art director of the film, *Stereotypes*, in Moscow and was co-author and lyricist for the musical, *Astra*. Robinson has also given cartoon demonstrations throughout Europe, Latin America, and Asia.

He maintains a full schedule with a syndicated political cartoon, *Life With Robinson*, and as President and Editorial Director of CWS (Cartoonist & Writers Syndicate). CWS represents over 150 creators from over 50 countries and distributes features to leading journals in the U.S. and abroad. Robinson serves on the Board of Directors of the International Museum of Cartoon Art in Boca Raton, Florida and as advisor to the Museum Cartoon in Basel, Switzerland. He serves on the editorial board of INKS: Cartoon and Comic Arts Studies, the journal of the Cartoon Research Library at Ohio State University. Robinson has also curated major museum and gallery exhibitions of cartoon art in the U.S. Europe and the Far East.



MARSHALL ROGERS

THERE ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE MARSHALL ROGERS TO BE THE QUINTESSENTIAL BATMAN ARTIST OF THE LAST TWENTY YEARS.

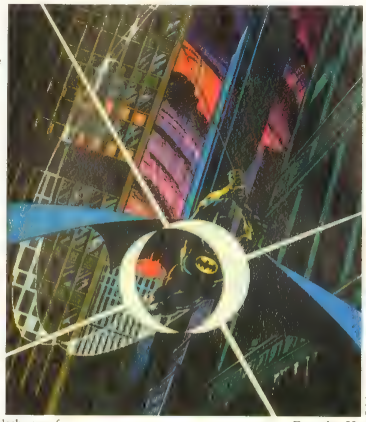
Mickey Mouse, Batman, and Superman were who I cut my eye-teeth on," recalls Marshall Rogers, "but [Batman and Superman] were never done right, as far as I was concerned. A lot of my Batman impression is what I always felt, as a reader/child, the character should look like. I've always seen the costume as being very symbolic. I think the Batman costume is one of the best designed costumes in all of comics. I always tried to work off of the basic initial design and make the character more bat than human. He was always my favorite DC character and so when the assignment came my way, I was extremely thrilled."

Rogers is a self-taught artist. He spent two years in college at Kent State, Ohio, studying architecture. He began showing portfolios to DC and Marvel in the early 1970s but without success. However, within several years, Rogers was able to freelance some work with Marvel Comics: new splash pages for reprinted such as *Planet of the Apes* and *The Fantastic Four* being reprinted in British editions.

Later about one year, he visited DC and met with art director Vince Colletta. Rogers' first assignment was a backup story for *Kamandi, The Last Boy On Earth* although it was ultimately published in *Weird War Tales*. Additional backup stories followed, including material for *The House of Mystery*.

Even though his association with Batman lasted only for about two years, Rogers' unique interpretation of the character was well received and is still often viewed as definitive. His first Batman assignment, inked by Terry Austin, appeared in *Detective Comics #468* (April 1977). Rogers' stories also appeared in *The Batman Family*. His work from this period has been reprinted in *Shadow Of The Batman #1-5* as well as several of DC's "Greatest" anthologies.

The Batman Portfolio, a selection of five Batman-related images illustrated by Rogers, was released by Sal Q Productions in 1981. The plates were colored by Lynn Varley.



Rogers' subsequent work appeared in *Heavy Metal*, as well as several books for *Eclipse: Scorpio Rose, I Am Coyote*, and *Cap'n Quick & A Foozle*. Although the latter was not a commercial success, Rogers feels it was a creative high point in his career. He also worked on *Doctor Strange* for Marvel during this period.

Returning to DC, he illustrated *DC Science Fiction Graphic Novel #SF-5: Harlan Ellison's Demon With a Glass Hand*. Rogers and writer Steve Englehart initiated *The Silver Surfer* in 1987, and Rogers departed after about a dozen issues to draw *G.I. Joe, A Real American Hero*.

He illustrated the 1989 *Batman* newspaper strip from its Nov. 6, 1989, inception until December 30, also penciling strips until Jan. 20, 1990.

In early 1992, he worked on a freelance contract design job for a video game company, a firm where he now works as full-time creative director handling video game design. A current project involves Penn and Teller.



DICK SPRANG

OTHER THAN BOB KANE, DICK SPRANG WAS PROBABLY THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ARTIST DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BATMAN.

"Movies were a great influence," Dick Sprang once recalled about his work, "simply because they had movement. In those years the moviemakers realized that the camera was a heck of a versatile device. There was no better means of telling a story than with a movie camera. But a comic artist works in a static medium. What I tried to do was get into my work a dramatic highlight, to isolate peak action in what moviemakers call the frozen frame, the equivalent of a comic page panel."

Sprang was born in Ohio in 1915. His father was a mechanical and electrical engineer, which sparked Dick's interest in depicting the complex machinery and props seen later in his comic book work. At age 15, Sprang began to paint signs, billboards, and lobby posters. In 1934, he was hired by the *Toledo News Bee*. Among his assignments: layout, composition, advertising art, and editorial cartoons.

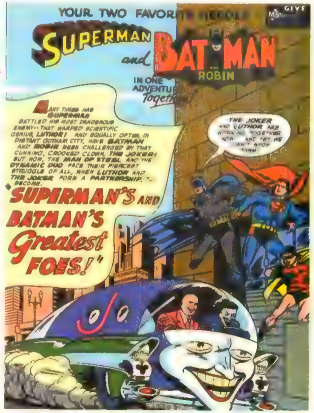
Sprang moved to New York City in 1936 and freelanced with fellow artists Ed Kressy and Norm Fallon from a loft office on 42nd Street. As a group, they generally did advertising illustration, while also handling lettering and scripts. Independently, Sprang began writing and illustrating pulp stories.

In 1941, Sprang designed a large, multi-panel, sample page and showed it to editorial director Whit Ellsworth at DC Comics. This quickly led to a 13-page Batman story assignment, making Sprang the fifth artist to illustrate Batman. Departing Kressy and Fallon, Sprang went on to pencil, ink, and letter additional Batman stories and soon was working on covers. Ellsworth's concerns about the potential drafting of Bob Kane resulted in Sprang's earliest material being inventoried until 1943. Sprang penciled a six-week installment of the *Batman and Robin* newspaper strip which appeared in 1946. By this time, intending to increase his output, his editors were assigning him only to penciling duties.

Some non-Batman work appeared in *Real Fact Comics*, but throughout his career at DC, Sprang principally illustrated Batman stories and covers for *Detective Comics*, *Batman* and *World's Finest Comics*. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, he penciled many of the Superman-Batman team-up stories and received several art assignments for *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen*, *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*, and *Superman*. Sprang departed comics in 1963, keeping occupied on his Utah ranch and working on historical investigations of Western pioneer trails, while occasionally finding time to draw and paint. He has worked on some documentary art, including various detailed historical subjects.

Because of the demand for his original art in the collector's market, Sprang began to recreate select material in 1984. After over a two-decade absence, he returned to comic books in 1987 with several illustrations that included his favorites: Joker and Penguin. Additional assignments followed occasionally with a pair of covers featuring Two-Face scheduled to appear soon.

Even though his last story appeared in 1963, Sprang's following was not to be confined to readers from previous decades. His stories were first reprinted in 1961, and nearly all subsequent Batman anthologies and collections have contained at least one of his efforts. He remains a favorite among fans for his concepts and accuracy as well as dynamic and original page layouts. This look, when combined with Charles Paris' inking, essentially

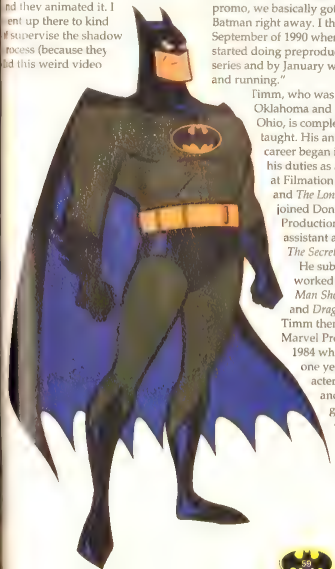




BRUCE TIMM

BRUCE TIMM INTRODUCED A WHOLE NEW LOOK TO BATMAN AND A SMALL SCREEN SUPERHERO NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD!

"It was summer of 1990 when Eric Radomski and I put together the Batman promo," recalls Bruce W. Timm. "It's a two-minute short. I storyboarded it and did character designs. We had somebody design the backgrounds, and then Eric actually painted all the backgrounds himself. We timed it and sent it off to a little studio in Canada called Lightbox Animation and they animated it. I went up there to kind of supervise the shadowing process (because they did this weird video shadowing treatment on it, rather than having painted shadows), and then carried the film back with me. We did sound here in Los Angeles. There's no dialog in it, just grunts and oofs and stuff, so basically it's Eric and I. I think I'm Batman and he's the thugs, like hitting each other. We did full sound effects. The music was just library music from the *Batman* film. After we finished the promo, we basically got the job to do Batman right away. I think it was September of 1990 when we actually started doing preproduction on the series and by January we were up and running."



Timm, who was born in Oklahoma and grew up in Ohio, is completely self-taught. His animation career began in 1981 with his duties as a layout artist at Filmation on *Blackstar* and *The Lone Ranger*. He joined Don Bluth Productions in 1982 as assistant animator on *The Secret of N.I.M.H.* He subsequently worked on *The He-Man Show*, *Space Ace* and *Dragonsalyer II*. Timm then joined Marvel Productions in 1984 where he spent one year as a character designer and background designer on *G.I. Joe*. After heading back to Filmation for *She-Ra Princess of Power*, he took several years off from animation. He freelanced briefly at Mattel Toys where he illustrated six or seven *He-Man* comics which were packaged with figures. Timm returned to animation in 1986 to work on *Spiral Zone*, then as a character designer/layout artist on *The New Adventures of Mighty Mouse*. *The Beany and Cecil Show* followed the next year, and he directed some of these episodes (only one aired before the series was canceled). Timm joined Warner Bros. Animation in 1989, working as a storyboard artist and character designer on *Tiny Toon Adventures*

In addition to developing the initial promo for *Batman: The Animated Series*, Timm is one of three producers for *B: TAS* (along with Alan Burnett and Eric Radomski). Timm has storyboarded episodes and approves all character designs. In fact, many characters appear on the series as completely envisioned by Timm, including Batman, Bruce Wayne, Commissioner Gordon, Detective Bullock, Mayor Hamilton Hill, Harvey Dent, Two-Face, Batgirl, Penguin, Catwoman, Ra's Al Ghul, Talia, Clayface, Red Claw, and Harley Quinn. The final look of some others was actually a collaborative effort (Joker, Poison Ivy, and Summer Gleeson). Riddler and Mr. Freeze were based on Mike Mignola designs.

Timm is currently involved with post-production on *Batman: The Animated* movie which is due to be released this Christmas. He is also working on 20 new series episodes for the second season. He is scheduled to illustrate a *Batman Adventures* graphic novel for DC Comics which will be written by *B: TAS* story editor Paul Dini

THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS...AGAIN!!!!

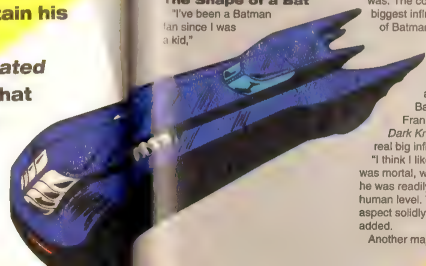
by Joe Funk

Few heroes in our society, comic book or otherwise, conjure such distinct images as Batman: the familiar logo, the dark brooding character, the unmistakable silhouette.

By retaining those trademark qualities, history has showed that Bob Kane's original Batman is open to a variety of interpretations. From Tim Burton's shadowy protagonist in the *Batman* blockbuster films to the twisted and dorky *Batman* spoof pulled off by Adam West in the 1960's, the Dark Knight has always managed to retain his intrinsic identity.

***Batman: The Animated Series* continues that tradition, but adds a depth and style that has quickly made it one of the most appealing Batman versions of all.**







"Run With It"

In 1992, a new interpretation exploded on the scene in the form of *Batman: The Animated Series*. One year and a bevy of critical acclaim later (including Emmy awards), this version of Batman has been thoroughly embraced by both traditional Batman fans and mainstream America.

The series began development when Warner Bros. Animation Studios executive producer Jean MacCurdy approached the *Tiny Toons Adventures* duo of Bruce Timm and Eric Radomski about doing a Batman animated series. "The only criteria Jean gave us was that they wanted something reminiscent of the Fleischer brothers *Superman* cartoons," Timm recalls.

Inspired by the unusual amount of freedom, Timm, Radomski, producer Alan Burnett, story editor Paul Dini, and a growing creative team began developing the series. Propelled by an uncommon synergy between animators and writers, they began modeling the show after what they considered to be the best animation and comic art styles.

The Shape of a Bat

"I've been a Batman fan since I was a kid," Timm continues. "The first thing that got me into the character was the live-action TV show. I was only six and I didn't realize it was a spoof. I took it seriously and was a Batman fan from then on. I had the Batman lunchbox, a thermos and all that.

As I grew older and started reading comics I learned who Batman really was. The comic books are our biggest influence on which version of Batman we consider to be the definitive Batman."

"Steve Englehart and Marshall Rogers comics from the 1970's are the quintessential Batman comics. The stuff Frank Miller did with the *Dark Knight* in 1986 is also a real big influence on our Batman."

"I think I liked Batman because he was mortal, without super powers, so he was readily identifiable on a human level. We have retained that aspect solidly in the series," Burnett added.

Another major influence on *Batman: TAS's* nouveau-classical style is the work of comic book illustrator and animator Alex Toth. "What's great about his art is that it's both ultra dynamic and illustrative but at the same time it's ultra simplified." Timm said. "When I was a kid, I actually didn't even like his comics, because I thought they looked like coloring books. But as I got older I began to see how deceptively complex his artwork actually is."

"The *Sleeping Beauty* cartoon that Disney did in the 1950's was another influence on *Batman: TAS*. "It was the first Disney film that got away from the real rounded cartoon characters and introduced more sharp, angular characters," Timm revealed.

"There's many ways of doing Batman, as long as they're cool, like the Frank Miller version or the Neil Adams interpretation. We feel *Batman: TAS* is one right way to do Batman," Timm said.

"My opinion on the *Batman* movies has gone back and forth. The first time I saw the movie I didn't like it.

I went and saw it again and thought it's really neat. The mood is really good but I have some problems with Tim Burton's vision.

On one hand, parts of them work really great but the biggest problem is that they're action films and there's very little action in them. They also took some liberties with the characters that I just wouldn't have done. My biggest problem is that they're just not much fun. The mood and mystery is great, but it's a little too dark and unpleasant," Timm stated.

Bat Technique

In an attempt to combine classic elements of the Fleischer cartoons with a cutting edge Japanese anime style, the team fused techniques from seemingly opposite ends of the animation spectrum. "We were trying to do something that had never been done before in TV: a feature film quality look on a Saturday morning budget and time frame," Timm said.

"At first, we had some great ideas, such as Eric Rodomski's idea for black backgrounds. We didn't know who was going to animate the series overseas, so we sent out a few sequences and the first one that came back was really awful — it looked like a typically bad Saturday morning cartoon show — just what we didn't want," Timm remembers. "It was really choppy. They didn't follow our background styling or character designs very closely. It really looked very standard and we were crushed wondering, 'Maybe it's going to look like typical stuff after all.'"

Bummed but not unbowed, Timm and his team tried other studios. "It took us a year before we got our first full cartoon back, which was the *On Leather Wings* show featuring Man Bat. After seeing it, we knew the series was going to work. Everything we laid out, they did. They followed our plans faithfully and we said 'Wow, it does work!'"

One reason the show works so well is that it incorporates virtually any and every animation trick in existence, in addition to a few original ideas.

Radomski's idea for using black backgrounds, for example, was at first scoffed at by tradition-minded animators who never used anything but white backgrounds. To create a heavier mood, the basic design for the series called for large patches of black in almost every frame.

After seeing the amount of time it took to fill in all the black areas, Radomski came up with the ingeniously simple idea of beginning with a black background and painting the scene over it. The effect worked perfectly.

But incorporating a dazzling array of tricks does not necessarily mean a desired effect will work. "All the tricks we use have been used before," Timm said. "But it's all in how you use them — knowing when to use the right trick at the right time. The imitated camera movements that simulate a live-action camera panning across an accident scene have been used for years by the Japanese."

In another departure from the helter skelter flow of typical Saturday morning fare, *Batman: TAS* has a much more deliberate pace." There's been a lot of other cartoons that I've worked on where they've tried to employ the same techniques," Timm recalls, "But for some reason or another, whether it was budget or timing constraints or whatever, it did not work."

"Timing is a very important part of our show. It's not like most other adventure cartoons where everything is moving at the same speed. In them, when two characters are speaking, the lines are falling on top of each other — there's no dramatic pauses. It's something our directors are very conscious of. They try to give our series a real-time, live action pace.

"The biggest lie of animation is that you don't need writers for an animated story," Dini attests. The Emmy awards won by the writers for the *Heart of Ice* episode vindicate that statement.

Good Guys

Turning from the show's style to its substance, the cast is made up of a collection of engaging, if not complex, characters.

Of course, Batman himself is the most important good guy. The Dark Knight is driven by a single, devastating personal event in his life — the murder of his parents. This wanton act of violence brought him to the iron-clad decision to devote the remainder of his life to the eradication of criminal activities. Obsessed with this mission, he can never truly rest.

Batman has no personal desire to inflict harm, even on his enemies. Bound by a code which forbids killing, his sole desire is to thwart crime and protect innocents.

Young Dick Grayson (a.k.a. Robin) was orphaned when his aerialist family, The Flying Graysons, fell to their death in a trapeze accident. Soon thereafter, the boy became the ward of Bruce Wayne who provided him with a home and solid financial support, and also allowed him to enter the secret world of Batman.

As the boy grew, Batman taught Robin excellent new skills which supplemented his gymnastic abilities. During his early teenage years, Grayson, as Robin, ventured forth into the night with his caped mentor.

Personally, I like Batman alone — the mysterious dark avenger of the night," Timm said. But I'm kind of like Joe Q. Public in that on one hand I really like Batman just as a loner, but on the other hand, there's just something classic about it when he and Robin team up."

In the second season, Robin will be a more common element, appearing in 13 of the 20 episodes.

Other than Robin, Bruce's butler Alfred is the only other person to know his employer's secret identity.

Alfred covers for his millionaire boss in many ways, deflecting every possible suspicion that Wayne might actually be the Dark Knight. He'll even go so far as to don a Batman costume on occasion.

World-weary and politically incorruptible, Gordon is loved by the law-abiding citizens of Gotham City and hated by its criminal elements. Although he cannot publicly condone the actions of Batman, the noble Commissioner is occasionally contacted by him and attends clandestine meetings with the Dark Knight.

Crass, scruffy and genuinely obnoxious, toothpick-chewing Harry







Bullock is a rogue detective who, like Batman, gets results. Bullock feels threatened by the unsanctioned presence of Batman in police affairs.

The attractive, red-haired daughter of the Police Commissioner, Barbara Gordon, is a high-school student who has taken her idol worship of Batman a step too far. In a misguided attempt to meet the Dark Knight, she has donned a look-alike costume and prowls the night as Batgirl looking for, and invariably finding, trouble

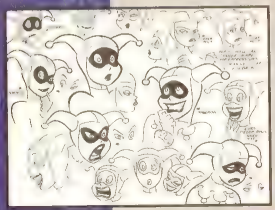
Other characters who occasionally



appear in the series on the side of fighting for truth, justice, and the Animated way are stylish attorney Harvey Dent, cynical cop Rene Montoya, weak-willed Mayor Hamilton Hill, and sensationalistic TV anchor Summer Gleeson.

Bad Guys

Viciously funny, cruel and sardonic, the Joker first encountered Batman during a botched robbery at the Monarch Playing Card Factory. Escaping by leaping into a drainage vat of chemical waste, he later discovered that the toxins had bleached his skin white, dyed his hair fluorescent green, and stretched his lips into a hideous, permanent grin.



Despite his clownish appearance, The Joker is one of Batman's most deadly enemies. Intelligent, theatrical and ever the showman, his arsenal of toys is second only to Batman's and includes joy-buzzers, gas-squirting flowers and exploding whoopie cushions. Ouch!

A mutant bird-like man with a mysterious past, the Penguin resides in the underbelly of Gotham. He's a ruthless, flamboyant, grandiose character, spouting bad Shakespeare with dreams of riches and status.

Well known for her large donations to animal rights organizations, Selina Kyle leads a double life. She is also the Queen of Crime who carries a cat-o'-nine-tails.

There is an undeniable attraction between Batman and Catwoman, and the Dark Knight sometimes finds himself torn between his feelings for her and seeing justice done.

A sharp-witted genius whose cryptograms befuddle Gotham police, Eddie Ashton (a.k.a E. Nigma, a.k.a. The Riddler) made a fortune inventing puzzles.

Tiring of the challenge, Nigma began masterminding crimes on a grand scale. When Batman deciphered one of his puzzles and sent The Riddler to jail, the analytical wizard swore to engineer a crime that even Batman couldn't solve.

Surprise, that handsome, charismatic D.A. Harvey Dent has another face. One of the most tragic figures in Batman's rogues gallery, Dent fell victim to an explosion which scarred half his face and twisted his psyche in the process. Two-Face carries a silver dollar which he flips to determine if he'll perform a good, or evil, deed.

As a child, Pamela Isley's only friends were the plants she tended in the family's greenhouse. But her life took a tragic turn when a large corporation forced her parents off their land. Vowing revenge, Pamela used her botanical skills to devise a love potion extracted from rare plants to bend evil men to her will. Adopting the name Poison Ivy, she began a life of crime, and subsequently leaves her victims screaming for calamine lotion.

During a fight, a freeze tank exploded, covering Mr. Freeze with cryogenic chemicals. After nearly freezing to death, Freeze recovered but learned that he must permanently live in sub-zero temperatures. Now, Freeze seeks revenge in a special helmet and suit that maintains his body temperature at an even 50 degrees below zero.

The Mad Hatter is a psychotic genius who commits crimes based on Lewis Carroll's *Alice In Wonderland* theme and controls peoples minds. Other villains include the lanky Scarecrow, the deceptively dangerous Ventriloquist, the shape-shifting Clayface, the warped Dr. Hugo Strange, the brutish Killer Croc, and the rampaging but fascinating Man-Bat.



Ugly Guys: Censors

"The worst thing about the censors, BS&P (a.k.a. Broadcast Standards & Practices), is that we never really know what they're going to say," Timm frets. "The rules change on every single show. Some shows we can have people getting hit in the face and other shows we can't."

"It's frustrating because we'll do something we've done in a previous show and they'll say 'Oh, you can't do that.' And we can't justify it by saying we've done it before."

"We always get tons and tons of censor notes on every show such as 'Get rid of those alcoholic beverages.' That's a big no no. But it's also a real touchy one because every time we have a party scene such as a big charity ball, what are the people drinking? So we've always had to make glass tumblers and put water in them. I guess everyone is drinking Perrier."

"In the upcoming season, we have an episode named *Harlequin-aid*, where there's this whole scene that takes place in a speakeasy and, well, people drink in a speakeasy. BS&P said we can't have any glasses, none at all. It becomes a game after a while."

On the other hand," Timm concedes, "The BS&P people serve a really good purpose. If we were allowed to go crazy, we might make some kids out there psychotic or something."

Despite such behind-the-scenes obstacles, "The BS&P people have never ruined a show. They've never taken the guts out of a show so completely that it ruined the episode."

The Second Season

To reflect its comic book roots, and in honor of *Batman #500*, Timm disclosed the team was working on an episode featuring Bane. "It's going to be a bit different than the comics. We're not going to be able to break Batman in two, so we've come up with a slightly different take on it."

"It won't be anywhere near the depth of the comic version, because we're trying to do in one episode what the comic series has covered over several issues. There's no wheelchair, no Azrael, no angst. It's going to be more of a fun knock-about half hour."

"Most of the other changes for the second season are reflective of what Fox feels. They do market research and survey kids and pass it on to us."

"The show is going to be a little less grim than the first season. Less of Batman being tortured by the death of his parents. I think the second season is going to be just as good as the first; it's just a little bit more fun. Fox definitely wants more super villains. Apparently kids would rather see Batman fighting the Joker rather than some thug with a trench coat and a big hat."

"That's fine, we've done enough of those kinds of shows. We don't need to keep using gangsters. There will also be more emphasis on larger-than-life action and more humor, but that doesn't mean it will ever be that campy Adam West style."

"There are still things I don't want to do with Batman. We'll never send him into outer space or anything. But the personality of the villain he confronts in a particular episode helps dictate the story. Batman wouldn't be in the same situations if he was fighting the Joker or Poison Ivy.

We're very aware of not repeating ourselves. During the course of the first 65 episodes, we kind of fell into a sort of formula such as: Batman does this, then he fires his grappling hook, then he flies away. So we're always trying to come up with new



things for him to do and the villains."

"There's not going to be a whole lot of new villains in the second season, basically just more of the rogues gallery including the Joker, Penguin Riddler, etc.

Paul Dini and I did create a new character called Baby Doll. She's a former child star, TV actress (a la Shirley Temple). She kind of has that Gary Coleman syndrome. Now she's 33 years old, but she still looks like a 6-year-old. Of course she's psychotic and she has a disgusting speech pattern that Paul came up with.



There will be one more Batgirl show in the second season. "I really like the Batgirl character and what the writers have done with her," Timm said. "Rather than making her this goofy young girl when they first introduced her in the *Heart of Steel* show, they established her alter-ego Barbara Gordon as being very intelligent, resourceful, and capable. So when she became Batgirl, it was almost logical. But she's also a fun character like Robin. A Batgirl/Robin team-up is actually planned where Batman appears very little. She'll appear in the fall.

There's been some talk about Sandman, but I don't know; it doesn't really seem to fit our show. Paul and the writers would like to do an episode with Neil Gaimon's metaphysical hero, but the *Sandman* comics are pretty talk-oriented and not very action oriented, and I don't see it working in our format. Animation is about fluidity and movement, and *Sandman* stories don't have much of that."



Other episodes include a three-part series dubbed *The Trial* — where the inmates of Arkham Asylum act as judge and jury; *A Bullet for Bullock* — loosely based on a Chuck Dixon detective story; *House & Garden* — Poison Ivy appears to have retired from crime; *Harlequin-aid* - Batman embarks on a *48 Hours* style romp to defuse a nuclear bomb; *The Terrible Trio* — featuring the Fox, the Shark and the Vulture; and a Batman crossover with Jonah Hex

The Movie Outlook

"The current plan is to use the computer generated Gotham City from the movie," Timm said

The map itself is a technological triumph. An upcoming feature film, it will eventually be used for the series. "The map is amazing," Timm said, "Gotham City exists. All we have to do is tell the computer where we want to start and where we want to end and we can zoom anywhere."

As far as the movie goes, it's basically being animated as we speak," Timm said. "Our end of it is done. pre-production was done months ago, and we're just now starting to get sequences back from overseas. We're starting the post-production process such as editing. The computer generated title sequence is being rendered on a machine in France."

Although most of the characters in the movie have already appeared in the series, a few new voices and faces will debut in the film. Stacey Keach does a voice in the movie. So does Abe Vigoda, Dick Miller, and Bill Mumy. When the movie is released this Christmas, keep an eye, or an ear, open and you'll be sure to recognize a few more Hollywood personalities

First Season: Episode Guide



01 "On Leather Wings"
[illegible]

02 "Christmas With The Joker"
[illegible]

03 "Nothing to Fear"
[illegible]

04 "The Last Laugh" (aka "Joker's April Fools")
[illegible]

05 "Pretty Poison"
[illegible]

06 "The Underdwellers"
[illegible]

07 "P.O.V."
[illegible]

08 "Forgotten"
[illegible]

09 "Be a Clown"
[illegible]

10 "Two-Face" Part One
[illegible]

11 "It's Never Too Late"
[illegible]

12 "I've Got Batman in my Basement"
[illegible]

13 "Cat and the Claw" Part One
[illegible]

14 "Heart of Ice"
[illegible]

15 "See No Evil"
[illegible]

16 "Cat and the Claw" Part II
[illegible]

17 "Two-Face" Part II
[illegible]

18 "Beware the Gray Ghost"
[illegible]

19 "Prophecy of Doom"
[illegible]

20 "Feat of Clay" Part I
[illegible]



encounter frightens Fox and lands Wayne in jail for assault. When Hagen tries to break free from Daggett's control, he is seized and force-fed an overdose of the chemical that completely alters his genetic structure and allows him to transform his body into any shape desired, turning Hagen into Clayface. With Bruce in jail and Clayface vowing for revenge, the episode ends. (See 521)

521 "Feat of Clay" Part II
Clayface learns that Daggett is to appear on Summer Gleeson's TV show to introduce his shape-altering chemical as a skin conditioner. He takes the shape of a woman and joins the studio audience. But Batman awaits the man who framed him and defeats the shape-changer with an electric current. Clayface is presumed dead, but Batcave tests show the clay-like substance to be unaffected by electricity.

522 "Joker's Favor"
Run of the mill accountant Charlie Collins inadvertently runs afoul of the Joker, and, when begging for his life, offers the clown prince of crime anything. Such an offer strikes a chord with the Joker, and he orders Collins to distract Batman while he plants a bomb at a testimonial dinner for Commissioner Gordon. An honest man, Charlie decides enough is enough and takes on the Joker man to man.

523 "Vendetta"
Detective Bullock is sent to prison for murder. Although not fond of Bullock, Batman believes in his innocence and reveals the real killer as Killer Croc, a mutant human seeking revenge for being sent to jail by Bullock years ago.

524 "Fear of Victory"
Scarecrow has developed a new fear chemical that is triggered by the release of adrenaline. Using it on Gotham's top athletes to bet against them in sporting events, he infects Dick Grayson's (a.k.a. Robin) former college roommate, who mysteriously becomes terrified during a football game. While helping Batman track down Scarecrow, Robin becomes infected and must overcome his worst fears to save a stadium-full of spectators from the evil villain.

525 "The Clock King"
Temple Fugate, a perfectly punctual man whose life is ruled by the clock, is persuaded by attorney Hamilton Hill to try altering his rigid schedule by 15 minutes one day. When he does, chaos ensues for Fugate resulting in a lawsuit that spells financial ruin for the clock watcher and prosperity for Hill's law firm. Swearing revenge on Hill, Fugate returns five years later as Clock King to wreak havoc on now-Mayor Hill's city while the mayor, himself, is abducted and tied to the minute hand of the Gotham Clock Tower. Unless Batman gets to him by midnight, the gears of hands will crush the mayor.

526 "Appointment in Crime Alley"
During his annual pilgrimage to meet Dr. Leslie Thompkins, the woman who raised Bruce Wayne after his parents were brutally murdered in Park Row, dangerous distractions prolong the Dark Knight's trip. Meanwhile, ruthless land developer and all-around bad guy Roland Daggett has hired arsonists to torch the section of Park Row called Crime Alley to make room for a condominium development. Dr. Thompkins, discovering the scheme, is taken hostage by the arsonists and left to burn in Crime Alley—unless Batman reaches her in time.

527 "Mad as a Hatter"
The Mad Hatter is using mind-controlling devices placed in people's hats to impress a woman named Alice. The Mad Hatter turns Gotham into a wonderland to please Alice's every whim, but goes berserk when he learns that she is in love with someone else. Batman must make his way through a bizarre chessboard of living pieces in order to restore sanity to Gotham.

528 "Dreams in Darkness"
Batman is infected by a Scarecrow concoction that causes non-stop nightmares and hallucinations when he thwarts the villain's plan to contaminate Gotham's water supply with the chemical. Unable to separate fantasy from reality, he is committed to Arkham Asylum while Scarecrow remains free.

529 "Eternal Youth"
The prospect of feeling younger lures Alfred and Maggie Page to a spa which features a natural rejuvenation potion. The potion is actually a new form of chlorophyll used by Poison Ivy to turn people into trees. It is up to Batman to save his unsuspecting friends from becoming foliage.

530 "Perchance to Dream"
It is the greatest day of Bruce's life: his parents are alive, he's engaged to Selina Kyle, and he is not and has never been Batman—it's all been a bad dream. Unfortunately, a number of clues lead Bruce to suspect that there is more than meets the eye. In a battle which pits Bruce against Batman atop a church tower, "Batman" is unmasked as the Mad Hatter and the only way to end this dream state is to throw himself from the tower.

531 "The Cape and Cowl Conspiracy"
Investigating a theft of bearer bonds intended for the starving people of Byelocradia, Batman is led to Josiah Wormwood, aka the "deathtrap specialist." Wormwood can create elaborate mazes of fiendish psychological torture designed to force secrets out of his victims. When a European nobleman contracts Wormwood to use his powers to get Batman's cape and cowl, he lures the Dark Knight into a wax museum.

532 "Robin's Reckoning" Part I
When Batman and Robin foil an extortion ring's plan to destroy a high-rise under construction, Batman discovers the name of the ringleader and refuses, without explanation, to let Robin join him in the investigation. Peeved, Robin consults the Batcomputer to find that the leader of the gang is none other than Tony Zucco—the man responsible for the death of Robin's parents, so the boy wonder decides to take matters into his own hands. (Part II—537)

533 "The Laughing Fish"
The fish in Gotham are sporting Joker-type grins thanks to a new chemical invented by the Joker, himself. When the Gotham copyright offices refuse to copyright the Joker-fish, Joker threatens to kill them, one by one, until he gets what he wants.

534 "Night of the Ninja"
In the midst of numerous robberies of Wayne Enterprises subsidiaries, Batman and Robin identify the culprit as a ninja named Kyodai Ken. Ken, the only boy who could beat Bruce Wayne in martial arts as boys in Japan, has returned for revenge on Bruce for exposing his plot to burglarize the dojo. Ken traps Bruce, Dick and Summer Gleeson, demanding a martial arts duel. If he obliges, though, Bruce risks revealing his secret identity to Summer.

535 "Cat Scratch Fever"
While tracking down her missing cat, Selina Kyle (Catwoman) uncovers a plot by villainous Roland Daggett and his company scientist, professor Milo, to infect animals with a disease that will spread through the city's strays and eventually infect the Gotham citizens. Daggett has the only cure, which he plans on introducing to the market and making millions. When Catwoman becomes infected, Batman races against the clock to save her.

536 "The Strange Secret of Bruce Wayne"
Judge Hargan, a friend of Bruce Wayne's and Commissioner Gordon's, is being blackmailed by Dr. Hugo Strange. Bruce decides to pay Strange a visit only to discover that the evil doctor has invented a device that can see people's thoughts. Strange proceeds to use the machine on Bruce and discovers the millionaire's secret identity. When he attempts to auction his knowledge to Joker, Penguin, and Two-Face, Batman uses the device to turn the villains against Strange.

537 "Robin's Reckoning" Part II
Hot on the trail of Zucco, in spite of Batman's wishes, Robin tracks the mobster to his hideout where Batman is trapped. The dynamic duo capture Zucco, and Robin finds out the real reason Batman tried to keep him away.

538 "Heart of Steel" Part I
High-tech secrets are stolen from Wayne Enterprises by a robot that Bruce knows could only be the product of one man, Karl Rossum, owner of Cybertron Labs. Meanwhile, Barbara Gordon suspects that her father, the commissioner, has not been himself as of late. In fact, it turns out that the commissioner as well as Bullock and the mayor, have been replaced by robots. It is all part of a plan by HARDAC, an artificial intelligence computer created by Rossum, to replace the entire human race with machines. When Rossum learns of the plan, he is replaced as well. Later, Bruce unknowingly invites a robot version of Randa Duane to dinner. She discovers the Batcave entrance and sets up an interface between the Batcomputer and HARDAC. When Batman attempts to use the Batcomputer, it attacks him. As he is being crushed, part one comes to a close. (Part II—544)

539 "If You're So Smart, Why Aren't You Rich?"
Edward Nygma, inventor of the hugely successful computer game, "Riddle of the Minotaur," demands his rightful share of the profits from his greedy boss, Mockridge. He is fired. Vowing revenge, E. Nygma returns years later to exact his revenge as the Riddler. While kidnapping his former boss, the Riddler encounters the Dynamic Duo and lures them into a maze based on the computer game.

540 "Joker's Wild"
A furious Joker escapes from Arkham Asylum when he learns of a new casino, Joker's Wild, which is exploiting his likeness. Also enraged, Batman knows that the Joker will destroy the casino and kill everyone in it to avenge his wounded pride. This is part of billionaire developer Cameron Kaiser's plan to cash in on insurance money when the casino is reduced to rubble. Always unpredictable, Joker decides to simply kill Kaiser and ruin the casino himself.

541 "Tyger, Tyger"
Eager to mate his new creation of a man-cat hybrid, Tygrus, genetic engineer Dr. Emile Dorian kidnaps Selina Kyle and injects her with a serum which gradually turns her into a cat-woman. When Batman tries to rescue Selina, he is captured and forced into a deadly game of cat and bat with Tygrus. With Selina's help, Batman convinces Tygrus that Dorian is wrong to experiment with human lives. The laboratory is destroyed during the escape, but Tygrus saves Dorian's life so that he can be brought to justice. Although he'd like nothing more than for Selina to stay with him, the man-cat gives her the antidote and allows her to leave the island.

542 "Moon of the Wolf"
Batman investigates the appearance of a wolf creature in Gotham, not realizing that the monster is actually one of Bruce Wayne's associates—Anthony Romulus, former Olympic champion and media spokesman. Years ago, seeking a steroid formula to help him win the decathlon, Romulus sought help from the devious Professor Milo, who obliged with a concoction that included a wolf hormone which causes recurring effects. To receive a cure, Romulus must do Milo's bidding as the wolf creature. When Milo sics the Romulus wolf on the Dark Knight, it disappears into a river. Though neither the wolf nor Romulus are ever seen again, an eerie howl can be heard from the countryside whenever a full moon rises over Gotham City.

543 "Day of the Samurai"
The daughter of Sensei Yoru, the martial arts instructor who taught Bruce Wayne and Kyodai Ken, has been kidnapped by his old former rival. The ransom—a scroll teaching the location of the [illegible]. Bruce and Alfred travel to Japan to help their [illegible] with his daughter. Batman rescues the girl, but Ken gets the scroll, and Alfred. The Dark Knight must accept Ken's challenge to a duel atop a volcano in order to save his friend.

544 "Heart of Steel" Part II
Batman escapes the steel clutches of the Batcomputer, but HARDAC disconnects before Batman can trace it back to Cybertron. The Bat signal beckons the Dark Knight to Barbara Gordon, who explains her suspicions. [illegible] their conference and attacks, only to be [illegible]. Batman, believing Barbara's story, sneaks into Cybertron [illegible] Barbara and both are captured and brought to HARDAC. A fight ensues and damages the robot [illegible] and Rossum. Gordon, Bullock and the [illegible] saved.

545 "Terror in the Sky"
Batman suspects Dr. Kirk Langstrom is up to his old tricks again when a man-sized bat wreaks havoc on Gotham Harbor. Kirk's wife, Francine, also suspects her husband, so much so, that she decides to leave him. After a DNA test proves Langstrom's innocence, Batman discovers that it was Francine who was accidentally infected with the Man-Bat serum. It's up to Batman and his Batwing to catch Francine and administer the antidote.

546 "Almost Got 'Im"
While hiding out at the criminals-only Stacked Deck Club, Batman's deadliest enemies (Joker, Penguin, Killer Croc, Poison Ivy, and Two-Face) play cards and swap stories of how they almost defeated Batman. Tonight is Joker's "electrocution," however, leaves the others in the dust. If it hadn't been for the intervention of Catwoman, the Dark Knight would be permanently retired. Joker continues to brag that he did put one over on Batman by spiriting Catwoman away during the confusion. Killer Croc then unmasks himself as Batman, takes care of the crooks, and races off to confront Joker's girl, Harley Quinn, who has orders to kill Catwoman if the Joker doesn't return.

547 "Birds of a Feather"
Upon Penguin's release from prison, he is disheartened to find none of his friends around to greet him. He is [illegible] by socialite Veronica Vreeland, who wants to use the Penguin to create a [illegible] by inviting a well-known criminal. During the process of convincing [illegible] came, Veronica takes a liking to the [illegible] begins to fall in love with her [illegible] Veronica's cohort [illegible] create a stir. Penguin discovers the motive behind his [illegible] and subsequently kidnaps Veronica for a huge ransom.

548 "What is Reality?"
Seeking to prove mental superiority, Riddler lures Batman into [illegible] contest inside a virtual reality computer game. [illegible] Batman learns that he is able to [illegible] the Riddler does. As the VR [illegible] "superior mind" is thrown into a state of [illegible]

549 "I Am the Night"
[illegible] the anniversary of the death of Bruce Wayne's parents [illegible] Thompkins pay their respects by laying roses [illegible] gunned down. Questioning the value of his [illegible] nicknamed Wizard from [illegible] Batman delivers him to a [illegible] Commissioner Gordon can delay [illegible] bigger. Batman [illegible] to keep Commissioner Gordon from [illegible] blaming himself for not being there [illegible] before any more of his friends are hurt, and [illegible] Meanwhile, the Jazzman [illegible] Commissioner Gordon [illegible] gave up being Batman [illegible] Batman confronts Jazzman and saves Gordon's life.

550 "Off Balance"
When the [illegible] The Society of the Shadows [illegible] in Gotham, the Dark Knight investigates [illegible] a freight train carrying a [illegible] gadget called the "sonic drill" [illegible] trying to stop the [illegible] power to disturb the [illegible] upside-down or standing on walls [illegible] Batman [illegible] "Talia," the real head of the Society [illegible] After both [illegible] a mutual [illegible] physical attraction [illegible] between the two, but [illegible]

551 "The Man Who Killed Batman"
[illegible] accidentally sending Batman to a fiery death while acting as a lookout [illegible] mobsters, third rate mob gopher Sidney Debris travels to [illegible] Thorne for help. It seems that after the initial accolades for his [illegible] he has become the man to beat throughout the criminal [illegible] and number one on the Joker's most wanted list for killing Batman before he did. Thorne too had heard the rumors and decided he better attack the bum before he got too big for his britches and started muscling his way up through the mob ranks. Just then, Batman appears to save Debris. Sid goes to jail, but he earns new respect in the big house as "The Man Who Nearly Offed the Bat."

552 "Mudslide"
Clayface returns, but he is falling apart [illegible] from further disintegrating, he has [illegible] he's known since his movie [illegible] so Clayface is forced [illegible] his shape for extended periods [illegible] her patient to [illegible] a deadly fight, Clayface is washed away [illegible]

553 "Paging the Crime Doctor"
Dr. Leslie Thompkins has been abducted [illegible] Thorne's brother [illegible] forced to [illegible]

554 "Zatanna"
When the glamorous magician Zatanna is framed for robbery, the Dark Knight rises to her defense. Grateful but puzzled by Batman's commitment to [illegible] her father, Zatara [illegible]

555 "The Mechanic"
Following a [illegible] Batman and Robin spot the Penguin's limo and begin a [illegible] Earl Cooper, to repair the vehicle, one of Earl's [illegible]. Sensing the connection, the Penguin takes Earl's daughter hostage, forcing the mechanic to help the villainous fowl set a trap for the Dark Knight. The plan—Earl must build a device which allows the Penguin to operate the Batmobile by remote control and send the crime [illegible] to a crashing halt.

556 "Harley & Ivy"
The Gotham tabloids have dubbed them "The New Queens of Crime," and the deadly duo of Harley Quinn and Poison Ivy intend to live up to that distinction. When dismissed from the service of the Joker, Harley teams up with Ivy and the two go on a wild crime spree. Joker has a fit when he hears [illegible] his former girlfriend is up to and sets out to get her back [illegible] in hot pursuit of the [illegible] both he and the [illegible] at the women's hideout at the same time.

557 "Shadow of the Bat" Part I
[illegible] commissioner Gordon for taking bribes from gangland [illegible] Rupert Thorne. Determined to clear her father's name, Barbara Gordon [illegible] appear at a rally organized by assistant commissioner [illegible] Batman sends Robin [illegible] a Batman costume and [illegible] Batgirl [illegible] Meanwhile, Batman, disguised as Matches Malone, infiltrates the headquarters of the one responsible for the [illegible] and discovers it to be Two-Face. Before he can escape, Batman is knocked unconscious and Barbara discovers the Mason is in on the framing. With Batman missing, she redesigns her costume and emerges as Batgirl.

558 "Blind as a Bat"
The Penguin [illegible] an experimental [illegible] the Raven [illegible] the Penguin begins throwing [illegible] Gotham landmarks. It is up to Batman to stop him. Using a special helmet developed using Raven technology, Batman is able to function by feeding the [illegible] sensor [illegible] into his brain. With [illegible] in place and the Penguin about to [illegible] Batman's device malfunctions, leaving the Dark Knight to battle the Penguin, armed with his deadly [illegible] while Batman is [illegible] blind.

559 "The Demon's Quest" Part I
When Robin is mysteriously abducted from his college campus, Batman begins a frantic search, until he is astounded by the sudden appearance in the Batcave of Ra's Al Ghul—the ancient cult leader whose name means "The Demon's Head." Ra's identifies himself as the leader of The Society of the Shadows, and explains that his daughter, Talia, has also been abducted by the same persons that have Robin. So begins an uneasy truce as Batman and "The Demon" team up to find the kidnap victims. The duo encounter several traps en route, one of which Ra's Al Ghul is apparently killed, and Batman is left to continue the quest alone. The trail ends in a mountain [illegible] where Batman discovers Robin held captive alone. After freeing the Boy Wonder, the Dark Knight is informed that the entire quest has been a [illegible] to see if he is worthy to replace the cult leader as head of the Society. It seems that Ra's, who has been kept alive for thousands of years thanks to the rejuvenating power of his Lazarus Pit, doesn't believe that his body will survive another resurrection and Batman is the most worthy candidate to replace him—not to mention that Talia has fallen in love with the Dark Knight. Batman rejects the proposition and Ra's suddenly collapses and is rushed [illegible]

[illegible]

560 "His Silicon Soul"
When Batman is [illegible] while stopping a robbery, he is surprised to [illegible] Rossum [illegible] learns that a robot version of himself has been fighting crime on the [illegible] Rossum [illegible] The [illegible] then arrives, and still believing it is the real Batman, reveals to Rossum that his mind has been implanted into a robotic [illegible] The real Batman returns, and a battle of the bats ensues. The robot Batman goes to the GCPD impound yard and discovers a data chip containing the files of HARDAC (see 538). When the chip is inserted into the robot's head, HARDAC is reactivated. Explaining that the robot Batman was a final duplicate created just before Cybertron Labs was destroyed but never activated, HARDAC assumes control of the robot in order to continue his plan to replace humanity with robots, and returns to the Batcave. Uploading HARDAC files into the Batcomputer, he informs Alfred that soon, he will have access to a global network of computers. The real Batman shows up and the battle of the bats is renewed, with the real hero falling into a steam [illegible] Believing he has just taken a life, the robot is filled with remorse and destroys the Batcomputer and himself in the process.

561 "Shadow of the Bat" Part II
As Robin investigates Gil Mason, who he has discovered to have underworld ties, the Boy Wonder encounters Batgirl. Each learns of a meeting between Mason and the ringleader, and with no love lost between Robin and Batgirl, both part ways, each arriving at the meeting separately. Mason joins Two-Face who has decided to execute Matches Malone. Batgirl tries to stop the [illegible], and gets herself, along with Robin and Matches, trapped in the subway which Two-Face begins to flood, initiating part two of his sinister plan. Two-Face arranges for Gordon to be bust out of jail as a way of further discrediting the commissioner and establishing Mason as head of police. In the subway, Matches changes into Batman, helping Batgirl escape, while he and Robin are swept away in the flood. Batgirl realizes that it is up to her to save her father and heads for Bayshore Wharf. Following an explosive escape, the dynamic duo also reach the wharf in time to tackle the crooks and save Gordon. Mason, however, attempting to flee in a speedboat, struggles with Batgirl as the craft crashes into the Statue of Freedom, leaving Mason a horribly disfigured vegetable and Batgirl a hero.

562 "Fire from Olympus"
Believing himself to be the reincarnation of the Greek god Zeus, wealthy shipping magnate Maxie Zeus hijacks an experimental electron cannon. Mounting the weapon atop his penthouse, Maxie plans to hurl "lightning bolts" down on the "wicked mortals" below. After breaking into the building Batman must withstand a series of Herculean challenges before confronting Maxie for control of the deadly weapon.

563 "The Demon's Quest" Part II
Freeing Talia from her father's clutches, Batman holds Ra's Al Ghul at bay long enough for the maddening effects of the Lazarus Pit to subside. Ra's activates a self-destruct mechanism for the fortress and retreats with his daughter, leaving the Dynamic Duo to narrowly escape themselves. Following two obscure clues Robin hears while a captive, they set out to find Ra's desert fortress. Closing in, Batman is overcome by attackers and thrown into a dungeon where he learns that there are many Lazarus Pits fed by a huge chemical spring deep beneath the Earth's crust. Ra's plans to launch a satellite weapon which will destroy the pits simultaneously and flood the Earth, leaving it both green and ecologically balanced as it was in its infancy—destroying all life currently on the planet in the process.

564 "Read My Lips"
Baffled by a series of crimes executed with clockwork precision, Batman discovers the culprit to be the notorious mob boss Scarface. When he follows the mobster to his hideout—a mannequin warehouse, he discovers it is actually a wooden dummy controlled by the mild-mannered "Ventriloquist." Batman, trying to convince him to turn states evidence against his split-personality, secretly plants a transceiver on the Ventriloquist to find out when the next caper will take place. When Batman arrives to prevent it, he is ambushed and taken prisoner. He awakens to find himself dangling by the feet over a pit of sharpened mannequin arms. Scarface stands, taunting the Dark Knight, but Batman manages to convince him that the Ventriloquist has turned traitor. The personalities collide and the paranoid Scarface fires to kill the Ventriloquist before being reduced to splinters in a burst of gunfire.

565 "The Worry Men"
Wealthy socialite Veronica Vreeland returns from Central America bearing tiny handmade dolls for all her friends. According to native legend, when placed under a pillow, the dolls do the sleeper's worrying for them. Unfortunately for Veronica and her guests, each doll contains a tiny microchip which plants hypnotic suggestions inside the sleepers' brains. Who controls the dolls? None other than the Mad Hatter. Batman tracks the Hatter to his hideout in an abandoned costume warehouse where the mad man gets the jump on the Dark Knight and tries to remove his cowl, head and all.

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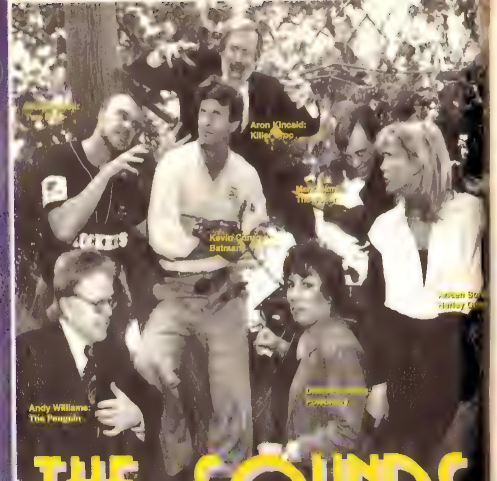
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THE SOUNDS OF A BAT

Elizabeth Taylor and Aerosmith guest star on *The Simpsons*, and suddenly every actor in Tinseltown is lining up for animation voice-overs. The hottest ticket for willing windpipes belongs to *Batman: The Animated Series*. The popularity of the Batman myth has prompted dozens of stars to guest on the show, not to mention the stars who have recurring roles, like Mark Hamill, Efram Zimbalist, Adrienne Barbeau, Richard Moll, Paul Williams, and the dynamic duo Kevin Conroy and Loren Lester.

We talked to several of the voices behind *BTAS*, to get an idea of what led them to the series, what they've experienced while doing it, and what the future holds for them.

The voice of Bruce Wayne, and his alter ego–the star of the show, Batman, is Kevin Conroy. Usually working "on-camera," Conroy may be familiar to readers for his roles on *Dynasty*, *Tour of Duty*, and as a doctor on last year's Fox sitcom, *Rachel Gun, R.N.*

"I've had a lot of television on-camera work, and in New York, I do a great deal of theatre," Conroy says. "This is the first animated voice I've done. It's kind of a new thing for me, but that seems to be the direction that a lot of animation is going—away from the more mainstream actors' voices to give cartoons a more realistic feel. That's the style of *Batman: The Animation Series*).

"There have been over two hundred actors involved in the show so far, and it's an amazing list of people. Every week I'm amazed at who's walking in. The feature that's coming out at Christmas has Dana Delaney, Stacy Keach, Mark Hamill, Abe Vigoda and myself. It's really an honor to be working on the show. I guess because of the success of animated features, they have no difficulty getting really wonderful actors to come in and do voices."

Do voices. It is a new expenence for Conroy, a different kind of challenge.

The voice is funny," he says. "I didn't have a very deep background in it, like Mark Hamill, who is sort of an expert on the whole genre of Batman. The producers said 'the character is known as the Dark Knight. He's very mysterious. He's a man of few words. What do you think that would sound like?' So my voice became deeper and huskier and darker and sort of a whisper. It became almost like a secret, like a man who lives in the shadows.

Bruce is very charming, very outgoing, very much a man of his moment, very comfortable in society, very athletic, yet with this very tortured secret. But you can't give any indication of that secret when you're playing Bruce Wayne. You can't give any foreshadowing of that because it would blow it for the other characters. No one's even supposed to suspect. And it also makes the drama of the show more pronounced if Bruce is as different as possible from Batman. So for (the voices), Bruce is very much a confident, socially easy-going guy, and Batman is a shadow. He has to sound to me like a shadow.



"In the earlier episodes there was one called 'Perchance to Dream' that really dealt heavily with why Batman became Batman, the tortures of his childhood and what he's been through. That's one of my favorites because it was so much fun to do. It was beautiful and I think the fact that so much of it was in black & white was really daring of them. It's hard for me to be objective. The episodes that I had good performances in are my favorites," he laughs.

Conroy draws a clear line between *BTAS* and other portrayals of Batman.

"I'm in my mid-thirties so I grew up in the sixties with the TV show," he admits. "But only after the features were coming out did I become more aware that the sixties show was a real departure, that is, it didn't have much to do with the original Batman. Our show goes back to the original concept of the Dark Knight.

And the future seems bright for *Batman: The Animated Series*.

"Fox is really happy with the way things are going. They made a three year commitment to Warner Brothers when they renewed. It's really phenomenal to be a part of this show because it's become kind of a cultural thing. Not only young people, but people of all age groups really enjoy this show and relate to it and get into it. It's fun to be part of a project which is that successful and means that much to people."



Loren Lester has done plenty of voice-over gigs, but these days he's locked himself into a sure thing--Robin, the Boy Wonder. Of course, there are a lot of expectations to live up to when one takes on a character with Robin's history.

"The script is written so well," he explains. "I've done a lot of animation, and the people who write the Batman scripts just write lines that are easy to say in the character. So that made it very easy."

As far as working on the show is concerned, he couldn't be having a better time. Especially since the ratio of 'Robin episodes' to 'non-Robin episodes' is fast changing in his favor.

"It's been wonderful," Lester admits. "At a certain point, they decided that Robin was really important. I did the very first episode and then disappeared for about forty episodes, and then, in the last twenty that they taped for the first season, I was used almost continually, nonstop. At a certain point I think they felt that the character was important to the story, but initially they didn't. I know that the network requested more Robin episodes for the second season. They're getting a lot of fan mail, and I'm getting a lot of fan mail, and the comic book based on the TV series is getting a lot of fan mail saying 'why aren't there more Robin episodes?'"



Many people have the impression that voice-over is a very solitary craft, that the actors work alone. That idea has been instilled in the public through our limited knowledge of 'looping,' which happens when an actor records, or re-records his or her lines in a movie after a scene has been shot. In reality, especially on *BTAS*, the actors work together, as in a play.

"All the time," agrees Lester. "On very rare occasions, an actor will have a job that takes him out of town, and they'll put him in later. But, I'd say ninety-plus percent of the time, all the actors are there. And I've worked with some great people."

Lester is very pleased with Warner Brothers' plans for Robin in the season to come.

"He's become a more integral part of the story," the voice of the Boy Wonder confides. "A lot of the exchanges between Batman and Alfred, where Batman took Alfred into his confidence in the first season...there's more of that with Robin this year.

Batman the Animated Series has been a boon for Loren Lester, and it's obvious what his favorite episode is.

"There was a two-part episode called 'Robin's Reckoning,' which was sort of the background to how Batman took Robin on as his ward. That's the one they submitted for Emmy consideration, and that's why the series is now nominated for an Emmy for Best Animated Series

Though the recent live-action films haven't included Robin, Lester fondly recalls one live-action version that had a real impact on him.

"I used to be fanatical about the sixties' TV show," he says. "Absolutely fanatical, never missed it, and of course I had every toy that you can possibly imagine. If it was on the market, my parents went out and got it for me."

And don't think that just because he grew up on the Adam West TV show, Lester doesn't read the Batman family of comics.

"I read them all the time," he assures us. "The Robin that I'm playing, I guess you know, is Dick Grayson in the current Robin's costume. It's a combination of the two."

He agrees that the new costume, Tim Drake's, is a great look, but what about that Robin who didn't look the part, Burt Ward?

"He was very skinny and very small and I guess he fit into the tights or something," Lester laughs. "But he was directed, I'm sure, to play it very over the top and campy and silly, which is what the whole theme of the show was. For what they were trying to achieve I think they achieved it very well. If you watch it now, it's hilarious. It's not the spirit of the comic book, but it's hilarious."



The animated Penguin, Paul Williams, is remembered for his roles in such films as Smokey & the Bandit, Phantom of the Paradise, and Battle for Planet of the Apes. He has endured, as have most actors, a burdensome number of uncomfortable costumes and restrictive makeup jobs. In that light, his first reaction to Batman: The Animated Series comes as no surprise.

"Oh, it's great. It's a great batch of actors, and nobody has to get dressed up. We can come at it just funky, and sit down and do it. And you don't have to memorize your lines, you just sit there and do it. Part of the joy of it, too, is having a really great director, Andrea is terrific."

At first, however, Williams wasn't certain he wanted the part.

"Doing the Penguin is strange," he admits. "I didn't read for it–they just decided they wanted me to come in and do it–and I'm very grateful for that. If they had called and said they wanted me to read for it, I would have said no. There's no way in the world I could ever do this part, based on having heard Burgess Meredith do it. I love Burgess Meredith's Penguin, so I didn't think I could do this. When I think of the Penguin, I think of Meredith

"I do him a little more erudite," Williams says. "He still has the caustic cynical tone, but he's also kind of sophisticated. I don't think it's so much the way I play him but the way he's written."

Obviously, like his co-stars, Williams learned the Batman mythos from Adam West. But had he been exposed to the comic books at all?

"I must have read the comic book a few times," he says. "But like most people my age, the television series was my real exposure to Batman. I associate all those great actors, Frank Gorshin as the Riddler, Buzz Meredith as the Penguin. You know."

When asked about Danny DeVito's performance in Batman Returns, Williams has nothing but superlatives to describe the other actor's performance. Still...

"Oh, of course, sour grapes. I'd love to have played it. But Danny gets all the luck. He's wonderful. Quite evil, y'know?"

Williams has been very impressed with the work of all the actors on the show, and one in particular.

"There are some fine actors who show up to do parts occasionally. Richard Moll was excellent. Efram Zimbalist is terrific to work with. It's kind of interesting to watch Mark Hamill, work because my exposure to Mark is as your basic hero type. To watch him dig into the Joker is great."

No news yet on whether the Penguin will return for season two, but Williams is hopeful.

"This is the first regular voice-over gig that I've done. I seem to be doing more of it.

We knew him as 'Bull' on the ensemble comedy Night Court, but these days we're more familiar with Richard Moll's voice–both the confident bass tones of D.A. Harvey Dent, and the gravely sinister threats of Two-Face. Sometimes, though, Moll forgets which role he's playing.

"I'm in the role of Catwoman," he claims. "Julie Newmar, move over."

Reminded that he might not fit into Newmar's costume, Moll relents.

"I once wore the shoes, and that was murder. They don't make them in 13D."

And what about that voice?

"We kind of fumbled around at first. The producer, Andrea Romano, wanted me to almost like a 'Godfather' voice. That was after Two-Face had the acid thrown on him. But after a while, we went back to the good old 'Dungeons and Dragons' voice, the nasty wizard, messed up voice, y'know, you've got that gravel in there. It's pretty chilling, so I think it works for the character. Once we decided on that, we stuck with it."



But the sound of Harvey Dent is "definitely closer to my real voice. In fact it may even be my real voice." Moll realizes.

Interestingly enough, Moll was unfamiliar with the Dent character before landing the gig on *BTAS*.

"I'd never heard of Two-Face before," he confesses. "I hadn't heard of Croc before, either. Of course, we've all heard of the Joker and the Riddler, and the Penguin and what have you. I remember Batman comics from way back when, but I'd never seen Two-Face."

One of the most suspenseful moments in comics is the flipping of Two-Face's coin.

"I enjoy the whole threat of the coin," Moll says. "Is it gonna be heads or tails? Is he gonna maim you or kill you? What's it gonna be? That's what I get off on."

Moll enjoys the way the actors work on the series.

"It's like the beginning of a horse race because everyone's in their own little stall and you're waiting for the bell to go off and you all run to the window. You're sitting in a semi-circle in these little stalls and each person has a microphone in front of them. It's almost like doing a play reading in a way."

Though he loves Two-Face, Moll has a lot of other projects on his plate these days.

"I'm working on a new cartoon called 'Mighty Max,' which is going to be coming out in syndication," he says. "I'm a regular on that. I do a character called Norman, a big swashbuckling warrior type who's got a bloodlust. He's a hero but he can't get enough fighting. Like a make my day' kind of guy."

When asked whether the audience can expect some 'Two-Face experiences' in season two, Moll's reply is typically sharp-witted.

"You'd have to ask my agent about Two-Face experiences," he mumbles.

The subject turns to Tim Burton's vision of the Caped Crusader, and Moll is surprised when he makes the connection he had previously missed–that Billy Dee Williams' character is the pre-Two-Face Harvey Dent. There's no way to know if Warner Brothers ever plans to use Two-Face, or if Billy Dee Williams would return in that role, but Moll is interested, of course.

"I'd love to play it," he laughs. "Gee, Harvey's changed a lot, hasn't he? Not only is he scarred, but now he's white! No, I'd love to do something like that. I love playing Two-Faces anyway, and it would be fun to bring Harvey to life on the camera. I think I could do a hell of a job with it. No offense to Billy Dee of course."

What's next for Richard Moll?

"I'm in the new movie 'The Flintstones,'" Richard says, an unabashed plug. "That's another one based on cartoon characters. Cartoons rule, man!

Bob Hastings, the actor who plays Commissioner James Gordon on *BTAS*, is familiar to an entire generation of Americans for his work on another show. He played Lieutenant Elroy Parker for the entire run of McHale's Navy. Anyone remember the voice of Joe Flynn as Captain Binghamton, screaming "Parker!?" Ah, nostalgia.

Actually, Hastings has been in the entertainment business since the thirties, and in some ways, voice-over animation is like coming home.



"It's like going back to radio, where I started," he says. "It's a little different because we all have little booths, and we're not looking at each other while we're working, but that's the only thing that's different.

"I started in 1935, in radio back in New York. I was a kid singer and then I did all the old radio soaps, Hilltop House, Kitty Kelly, all of those. Then I went into the service and won the war, I guess. I don't know if we won, I'm not sure yet. I was a navigator on a B-29. And then I came out and went back into radio, and as for comic books, I played Archie from Archie Comics from 1946, until about '55 on NBC Radio

The day I walked in they said, 'my God, you even look like Gordon.' I said, 'What? He has white hair. I don't have white hair.' But I had a moustache at the time and I have that cowlick at the front of my hair."

Of course, with a career stretching back as far as Bob's does, he had some opportunities the rest of us can only dream about.

"I think I probably had the first Batman magazine that came out. I used to commute from New York to Chicago to sing on a show, and my folks always gave me some comic books to read on the train. I wish I had saved it. I had them all.

With his roots in a more wholesome time for entertainment, how does Hastings feel about today's entertainment, including BTAS?

"I have found that a lot of fathers I know have the kids tape it so they can see it. So I don't think it's strictly for children. It can be above children in a sense, but the cartooning makes children want to watch it...it's an exciting show.



"I think the best actors I ever worked with were radio actors. You had to be a good actor in radio for people's imagination. Now you can have a guy who's six-foot-eight, who can't act, come in and say "I'm going to kill you,' and it comes across.

But you couldn't do that on radio...I think young people have missed a great deal because of television

WHAT'S COMING?

Here are just some of the famous voices the show has and will feature.

- Ed Asner
- Ed Begley, Jr.
- Robbie Benson
- Julie Brown
- Levar Burton
- John Rhys-Davies
- Mickey Dolenz
- Richard Dysart
- Matt Frewer
- John Glover
- Michael Gross
- Harry Hamlin
- Dorian Harewood
- Katherine Helmond
- Marilu Henner
- Ernie Hudson
- Brion James
- Jeffrey Jones
- Heather Locklear
- Meredith MacRae
- Tim Matheson
- Kevin McCarthy
- Roddy McDowall
- Kate Mulgrew
- Diana Muldaur
- Ron Pearlman
- Joe Piscopo
- Alan Rachins
- William Sanderson
- Peter Scolen
- Marc Singer
- Helen Slater
- Jean Smart
- Loretta Swit
- Jay Thomas
- David Warner
- Treat Williams
- Paul Winfield
- Michael York
- Adam West

BATMAN'S Toy Chest



by Joe Desris

Is there an 8-year-old who has not seen *Batman: The Animated Series*? Are there any erudite scholars who have not yet microanalyzed the socio-political framework of Frank Miller's Dark Knight? Are there any serious comic and toy collectors without at least half a dozen Batman-related collectibles?

Several years ago, a syndicated gag-panel newspaper strip depicted a TV news crew in the front yard of the only man in America without a Batman T-shirt. More recently, a couple told me of their 4-year-old grandson's July birthday party. Little Tom Robbins had a complete Batman party from cake, to decorations, to presents. His brother, Ben, received similar treatment last February. Looking at the incredible world-wide success Batman has enjoyed during the last five years, it is hard to imagine such a recognizable popular culture figure unaccompanied by figures, mugs, socks and posters. But it was not always so.

Early Merchandising

To better appreciate the Gotham Guardian's current spectacular merchandising success, one needs some background on previous peaks and valleys. Batman first appeared in 1939, although it was several years before he was depicted outside of comic books. The success of Superman, who appeared a scant 12 months before Batman, was...well, faster than a speeding bullet. Not only did the Man of Steel (along with Superboy and Superwoman) appear at the 1940 World's Fair, but Superman quickly earned his own radio program and his own series of animated theatrical cartoons. He had his own dolls, gum cards, ray guns, rings, and costumes decades before Batman. Superman appeared in a syndicated newspaper strip in 1939, while Batman's much shorter-lived version began in 1943 (however, Batman's 1943 movie serial beat Superman's effort by five years). Perhaps it was those Kryptonian superpowers that captured the public's imaginations and wallets, but Superman nevertheless dwarfed Batman's licensing efforts throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Excluding comic books, literally 99 percent of all Batman collectibles date from 1966 to the present.



Batman merchandise from the golden age is largely comprised of movie material from the 1943 and 1949 movie serials (rereleased in 1954 and 1958), including black and white stills, one-sheet posters and 11" x 14" lobby cards. A number of promotional items also exist, such as brochures about the newspaper strip, movie serials, and comics; however, such pieces typically are unique with only one or two known examples, usually in the hands of very advanced collectors. A mask, given away in conjunction with the newspaper strip's introduction, along with a Robin trading card, several postcard premiums, and a 1944 set of decals, generally comprise the balance of Batman's first quarter century of licensing. Not much. Big deal. Actually, it is a big deal if you are trying to locate this material since it has become very desirable and increasingly difficult to find.

Work In Progress

Many of the better-known bat-related gizmos and inventions which would eventually make Batman licensing so successful were not fully formed at the outset. It took about ten years to fully develop all the pieces. For example, the lifesaving utility belt evolved and expanded, stabilizing to some degree in the early 1950s. In addition, the comic book texts did not define Batman's headquarters as being underground until 1942 (an early version of the trophy room had windows), and it was not until 1943 that the newspaper strip named the "Bat Cave." In 1948, the Batcave was finally defined as a natural subterranean cave. The Batmobile also seemed to be on the five-year plan, getting an overhaul every so often.

Batman and Television

Superman beat Batman to the TV screen as well, by about 15 years, although the George Reeves series did not have the immense success enjoyed by Batman, particularly during Batman's first year on the air. Often revered by toy collectors yet despised by comic collectors, the *Batman* TV show was singularly responsible for making Batman an intensely well-known and recognizable character. It proved that comic book heroes could be immensely successful outside of their native medium, and (unfortunately) for laser-etching "Biff! Pow! They're Comic Books!!!" onto the brains and keyboards of reporters and journalists for decades to follow.

Although Joker and Catwoman had existed almost from Batman's beginning, Riddler only appeared twice during the 1940s and was largely brought to the forefront of Batman's Rogue's Gallery because of the TV series. In fact, the series not only popularized Riddler but also Catwoman, Joker, and Penguin as Batman's ultimate protagonists. Almost to the exclusion of other villains, these four evildoers still epitomize Batman's criminal nemeses, whether in comics or collectibles.

There were other simultaneous and coincidental factors that worked in Batman's favor in 1966. For example, the drawing power of network TV was much stronger than it is today and the use of color on television was still a relatively recent innovation (technicians on the Batman series put color to extremely good use). Much of what is popular among today's Batman collectors (licensed action figures and vehicles), did not come into prominence until the 1960s. While Mattel's Barbie changed the meaning of dolls, Hasbro's G.I. Joe made it okay for boys to play with dolls (excuse me...action figures). Ideal's Captain Action expanded the idea, including comic characters such as Batman, Superman and Spider-Man. Innovations in the handling of plastics and molds as well as methods of distribution, TV advertising, mass marketers, perhaps even the expansion of stores such as Toys R Us, all made certain kinds of toys possible and available. Some of these simply could not exist, or were not fully developed, in the 1940s and 1950s (for example, superhero model kits).

The Onslaught Begins

Ideal first dealt with Batman and other DC Comics' superheroes in 1965 when it initiated a study to research the potential of the Captain Action concept. Begun in April, the study tested Captain Action as different heroes of history, TV personalities, movie stars, and comic book heroes. Results proved the idea of interest to boys and that comic book characters were most popular; none of the other categories were even close. Ideal then signed agreements with the various companies and licensing agents involved, including



Licensing Corporation of America (LCA), and the Captain Action line was underway.

In October 1965, ABC officially announced the *Batman* television series and Ideal quickly licensed a helmet, cape, and utility belt. These toys had fantastic sales and became some of the era's most popular and memorable Batman items.

A few companies fortuitously had merchandise available in 1965. Hasbro offered a board game and several paint sets. Aurora's original Batman plastic model kit was copyrighted 1964, two years before the TV series began. I still remember buying one at Montgomery Ward's. As I recall, they had quite a number of them on the shelf, perhaps about two dozen. So why didn't I convince my parents to buy them all? Maybe because kids are supposed to play with toys, not keep them sealed in packages. But it would have been a great investment.



Batman merchandising got serious when the Batman TV series premiered January 12, 1966. When it was clear the series was a hit (which took about 24 hours), surprised manufacturers found themselves scrambling to sign contracts, rush into production, and get product into stores as quickly as possible. Hundreds of different products were shipped to stores in a matter of months. Batman and his entourage had arrived in a big way. People wanting to identify with this *immensely* popular show created an instant and insatiable market for Batman paraphernalia.



Sales of Batman comic books skyrocketed along with a previously unknown demand for Batman lunchboxes, coloring books, sticker books, milk, peanut butter, dolls, phones, utility belts, buttons, costumes, nightlights, paint sets, belt buckles, shoes, records, posters, playsets, Pez, puppets, banks, bedspreads, and a wide variety of toys including Batmobiles, Batarangs, Batplanes, and more. Batman was everywhere: in magazines, on cartons of ice cream and orange juice, in ads for tires and even on bags of bread.

Aurora expanded their line of model kits to included not only Batman but Robin, the Batmobile, Batboat and Batplane (their Penguin figure and a Batcycle are the rarest of the seven kits produced). Topps issued bubble gum cards with those wonderful Norm Saunders paintings. The plastic-coated looking figures and the impossible lighting effects are too cool for words. Soakies were plastic containers filled with bubble bath and shaped like figures of Batman and Robin. A company named Butler made a Bat Brush, typifying one of the more bizarre aspects of licensing: put a logo on anything. The oddity of a Batman toothbrush, and a great display card ("Holy Toothache Batman!" blurts Robin) are what make this piece desirable.



Few wildly original and successful trends are ever anticipated. They simply run their course at their own speed. In the 1960s, Batman was one such trend. By late summer, 1966, the phenomenon had begun tapering off. Sales were less dramatic, yet Batman remained a very well-known commodity. As with most unexpected successes, a significant amount of merchandise arrived too late to take advantage of the peak in popularity



Manufacturers who overproduced and retailers who bought too much too late were saddled with excess inventory (unfortunately for today's collectors, their misfortune has not made 1960s Batman collectibles any easier to find).

Some additional items were released later in 1966 and into 1967 (with the introduction of Batgirl) and the TV series did well enough to continue until early 1968, immediately entering syndication that fall. The animated *The Batman/Superman Hour* premiered Sept. 14, 1968, but licensing for Batman was almost nonexistent over the next six years.

1970s and 1980s

A comparatively modest 1970s resurgence in Batman memorabilia came about largely because of two companies: Mego and AHI. Mego, best known for producing various action figures, dolls, and playsets, introduced the first in a series of Batman-related figures in 1972. Additional Caped Crusader collectibles in various sizes followed through the end of the decade. AHI released an extensive line of Batcycles, Batcopters, Batmobiles, and other toys. The advent of the *Superfriends* in comic books and on Saturday morning television also carried Batman along (Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and other DC heroes comprised the group). During the 1970s, Batman was often featured on products with other *Superfriends*. In 1978, licensing for the first Superman movie caused another surge in popularity for all DC characters, including Batman.

Toys from the early to mid-1980s primarily featured the *Super Powers*, an updated version of the *Superfriends*. Licensing during this period was not seen as frequently as just a few years before, but several new Batman products made it to the stores each year.

Batman and Batman Returns

The release of Warner Brothers' immensely successful movie *Batman* in June 1989 resulted in worldwide licensing of the character. Popularity reminiscent of the early months of 1966 caused another flood of merchandise and drove up both demand and prices for older Batman collectibles. Most manufacturers were instructed not to ship product until the movie's release, thereby preventing early sales in a period when demand was high. Still, a plethora of Batstuff was available. But just as in 1966, some manufacturers were caught off guard with too little of their product reaching stores in time for the height of the movie's popularity. Sales were feeding off a nationwide Batman fever, and manufacturers attempted to rush out additional products. With cash registers ringing up figures in the millions of dollars and some items manufactured in hundreds and hundreds of thousands, it is difficult to believe there are any rarities from 1989, yet they do exist. Unaware of how high actual sales figures would be in some cases, a few limited edition items were released in incredibly low quantities. A pair of Batman and Joker statues, sold through Warner Bros.' catalog, are good examples. Only 50 pair were produced and they immediately sold out.



In the fast-paced Batman market of 1989, even some initially common toys were later modified due to character likenesses, packaging design improvements, or safety considerations (variations on the face of Toy Biz's Batman figures and Penguin's ever-changing missile come to mind). Collectors thrive on such instant rarities, but the challenges lie in distinguishing between the rare and commonplace in advance, before an item has become pricier and more difficult to locate.

Although I am not convinced that all of the Batstuff released in 1989 approached the volume of Batman licensing from 1966, it seems that 1992's merchandise onslaught actually outdid 1966. It was certainly better planned than ever before, with tie-ins and coordination worked out well in advance of the movie's release. Factor in worldwide licensing efforts, items which most U.S.-bound collectors may never see, and the result is more collectibles than your credit card can bear.

Of course some products may receive new packaging while others simply do not sell well, may have an intentionally short shelf life, or may simply be unavailable in certain areas. Ralston's *Batman Returns* cereal was around for less than half a year. Impact International's line of ring binders and notebooks were available during the summer and fall of 1992, and have generally not been seen since (they are no longer being made and there are no more in their warehouse). Tsumura International Inc., as Kid Care, made several bubble bath figures which were easily found, but their Batmobile Floating Soap Dish and Bathroom Set were very difficult to locate. I only recently found the latter at a closeout store.

Many interesting and unusual pieces have been issued overseas. During the last four years, food licensing has been very strong in Canada, Germany, England and Japan, yet comparatively little has been done here in the U.S. Germany's Bully issued many nice figural items in 1989, but few of them made it to the U.S. as the company was only licensed to sell their products in Europe. Batman has also maintained a strong presence in Japan, with numerous products issued only for the Japanese market.

So What's Rare?

The word rare can be subjective; many collectors frequently consider the rarest and most desirable items to be things they do not yet own, regardless of genuine scarceness. Some items are easy to locate, yet very rare in complete, unused, perfect condition. Others are seldom seen in any condition. A list of rarity factors that most Batman collectors would probably agree upon include whether an item is desirable, unusual, uncommon, interesting, valuable, salable, and complete. Ideally, all of these attributes should apply.

Age is not necessarily a major factor in defining rare Batman merchandise. All 1940s items could be considered rare due to age and availability, although some pieces, lobby cards for example, can be found with a modest amount of searching.



Although of comparatively recent vintage, a number of pieces from 1966 are mystifyingly impossible to find at any price, such as Remco's Batmobile dashboard. There surely are more rarities from 1989 and 1992, but it will take several more years to distinguish between the difficult and the truly rare items from such a recent period.

What, No Women?

Catwoman first appeared in 1940, but her likeness did not appear outside of comic books or newspaper strips until 1966. When licensed, she was rarely without the presence of other Batman villains or heroes. The Batman mythos has usually been male-oriented, although Batgirl, Vicki Vale, Poison Ivy, Aunt Harriet and Catwoman are notable exceptions. While some Batgirl collectibles were issued over the last 25 years, the Feline Fury's villainy apparently kept her away from much licensing.

Except for some Batgirl items, until now, little Batman-related merchandise existed that was aimed at females. Perhaps young girls, their mothers, and the toy manufacturers, did not perceive Selina Kyle as the ideal role model for young womanhood, relegating the Feline Fury to licensing obscurity. Perhaps girls identified more easily with a heroine such as Batgirl. A dramatic change and increase in the number of Catwoman collectibles resulted from tie-ins with *Batman Returns* as she now appears on portfolios, books, trading cards, figures, cups, T-shirts, and more. *Batman: The Animated Series* gave a boost to available Catwoman material.

New things

The majority of new licensing for 1993 revolves around *Batman: The Animated Series* on Fox. Additionally, most of the *Batman Returns* movie-style packaging is no longer featured on products, with a switch to art from the animated series.

Six Kenner Batman figures began to ship this January: Turbojet Batman, Penguin, Robin, Combat Belt Batman, Riddler, and Two-Face. Other brand new figures: Man-Bat, Scarecrow, Infrared Batman, Bruce Wayne with Batman costume, Sky Dive Batman, Joker, Catwoman with bull whip, Ninja Robin. New deluxe figures: High-Wire Batman and Mech Wing Batman. New mini-vehicles: B.A.T.V. (Batman all-terrain vehicle), Bat-Signal Jet, Hoverbat. Other vehicles: Batcycle, Jokermobile, Robin Dragster, Batmobile and a Turbo Batplane. Plus: the Batcave Command Center and an Armor Set reworked for the look of the animated series. In the *Batman Returns* line, Aero Strike Batman is relatively recent.

Batman Returns software for all Sega and Nintendo systems was issued earlier this year. Games based on the animated series will be out later this year from Konami.

Ertl's line of die-cast figures includes Batman (two poses), Catwoman, Joker, Penguin, and Robin. New vehicles: Batmobile, Batplane, Batboat, Batcycle, Bruce Wayne's car, and a Gotham City helicopter. A different animated series sticker is included in each blister pack of figures and vehicles. A new Crime Alley Chase set as well as an Animated Batman helmet and walkie-talkie set round out their line. Topps issued a 100-card set on the animated TV series this spring.



Horizon plans new model kits of Joker and Robin. McDonald's will have a promotion this fall with several small vehicles/figures from the animated series. A Fox TV giveaway is also in the works for this year. Skatewing International is offering an animated version of their Bat-Wing ride-on toy, supplanting the previous movie-art style.

Additional material with packaging inspired by the animated series: from Playtime, a Crime Alley Road Chase, and an Electronic Sounds Pinball game. From Zak Designs: children's dinnerware sets including: plates, vinyl placemat, cup, bowl, spoon/fork set, and tumblers. Colorforms will have a standard play set. Milton Bradley has a Waterful and Lite Brite set. From Kenner: a Colorblaster set. Originally discussed for a summer release on videocassette, *Batman: The Animated Movie* is now slated for a Christmas theatrical release featuring Phantasm, a new villian.

The Disease of Collecting

Collecting is a very personal hobby with disparate tastes. Everyone has a personal roster and opinions vary on what the "best" items really are. I've seen shelves full of Batmobiles owned by collectors who could care less about Megos or Batman jelly jars. Others only collect Joker items. My interests tend to be broader, reflecting some rather obscure categories.



One example: paper items. I picked up the toy disease after being infected with comic book-itis. I've never really understood why toy collectors frequently shun comics, coloring books, and other paper goodies, but many do. Some seem to think if an item isn't metal or plastic, it isn't worth owning, but I still enjoy sorting through a box of comics.

Although my favorite Batman collectibles skew more toward the 1960s, I still have quite a number of recent favorites. They include some of the Kenner Dark Knight figures, the 1970's Executive Desk Set, Mego's Batgirl and Catwoman, many of the 1989 Blue Box Batman toys, and Kenner's most recent Batcave. Someone once remarked that the golden age of comics isn't really the 1940s. It's when you're about 9 years old and whatever you're buying at that time. When he is 40 years old, a collector born in 1982 will probably think much more of the 1992 flood of Batman merchandise and the things he had as a kid, than of all that "old stuff" from the 1970s or 1960s.

If you have this addictive habit of toy collecting, spend your hard-earned bucks on things you enjoy having and displaying. Collect for fun and establish your own golden age of toys. Invest your time in toys searching for things you think are cool, not what other people think looks great on their shelves. But invest your money in toys only after you know exactly what you are doing. Several friends of mine have managed to make a decent living in the collectible toys market, but they have years of experience. Toys are a lot more fun when you don't have to analyze every purchase like a stockbroker. Collect freely, invest carefully, and most important....HAVE FUN!

ANDY MANGELS' BATMAN SPECIAL

HOLLYWOOD HEROES

The comic world's most famous detective would seem a most unusual candidate for Most Popular Hollywood Hero. After all, a man who dresses up as a bat, who is aided by a teenage boy in bright colors, and who faces villains with more bizarre fetishes than a decade's worth of *Oprah* shows...well, maybe that is just the thing for filmmakers.

Fifty years after his first screen appearance, Batman leads the rest of his costumed compatriots in time logged from films, TV series, and animated shows. Only Superman rivals his *Detective Comics* buddy, but the Man of Steel and the Dark Knight might have to duke it out to find a victor.

First appearing in May 1939's *Detective Comics* #27, Batman was created by Bob Kane and writer Bill Finger. Hollywood was a little slow to catch on to the popularity of the gloomy hero, but since 1943, little time has gone by that a cinematic or televised version of *Batman* hasn't thrilled generations of fans. Now, with an excellent animated series, a new animated film, and two live-action films under his utility belt, Bat-fans have more reason than ever to emerge from their Batcaves. In this special edition of *Hollywood Heroes*, I'll trace every version of the Caped Crusader, sharing with you the screen secrets of Batman.

SOGGY SERIALS

Columbia Pictures had experience with superhero "serials," the 15-30 minute mini-movies with cliffhanger endings, which theaters ran a new chapter of each week. The studio had already adapted several comics: *Mandrake The Magician* (1939); *Terry and the Pirates* (1940); and *The Phantom* (1943). In July 1943, they released *Batman*, a 15-chapter serial which both utilized existing comic book concepts and created new ideas.



Batman and Bruce Wayne were played by Lewis Wilson, a slightly pudgy actor whose Wayne was the height of playboyish irresponsibility, and whose Batman was a brooding no-nonsense crime-fighter. He was assisted by young "A" movie actor Douglas Croft, who played both Bruce's ward Dick Grayson and the energetic Robin. Their butler, Alfred, was played by William Austin, a man whom the *Batman* comic artists changed their version to resemble. Both the "Bat's Cave" and the entrance behind the grandfather's clock were introduced in the serial, and later picked up by the comics.

In the multi-part story, Batman fights the villainous Dr. Daka (J. Carroll Naish) and his Japanese spy ring, often pausing to rescue pretty reporter Linda Page (Shirley Patterson).

Today, the serial seems fairly racist, but the anti-Japanese sentiments were indicative of the attitudes of the day. In the thick of World War II, Daka and his spies made the perfect villains.

Although *Batman* was well-received, it wasn't until May 1949 that a 15-chapter sequel was filmed. *Batman and Robin* paid no attention to the first serial, and it was a step down in quality. Robert Lowery (who resembles Michael Keaton in several shots) was the floppy-eared Batman, and John Duncan was the much-too-old Robin. Jane Adams played girlfriend Vicki Vale, Eric Wilton became the boring servant-like Alfred, and serial star Lyle Talbot (later Lex Luthor in *Atom Man Vs. Superman*) portrayed Commissioner Gordon. Also, the Bat-Signal was used by the police to contact the Caped Crusader for the first time.

The mystery of *Batman and Robin* concerned The Wizard, a hooded villain who uses his fantastic inventions to extort money from Gotham City.

Unfortunately, despite being directed by *Superman* serial director Spencer Bennet and producer Sam Katzman, *Batman and Robin* displayed little of the charm found in *Superman* or the original *Batman* serial.

Batman was rereleased in 1965 as *An Evening With Batman And Robin*, while *Batman and Robin* was later reissued as *The Return Of Batman*. Both serials are available on video, though the GoodTimes Video release of *Batman* has changed its narration to take out most of the anti-Japanese slurs.

NEXT STOP: CAMP BATMAN

By the mid 1960s, *Batman* comics had degenerated into bizarre campy stories; Batman encountered space aliens, wore rainbow Bat-costumes, and became a baby. He also fought alongside Batgirl, Batwoman, Ace the Bat-Hound, and the impish Bat-Mite. Fans conveniently *forget* this era when they describe the 1966 *Batman* TV series as "embarrassing" and "forgettable."





ABC executives were looking for a new hit show, and they thought the comics were a good place to find ideas. They settled on *Batman*, turning the job over to William Dozier, who decided to use a campy approach on the show. A slightly chubby Adam West was cast in the Batman role, capitalizing on his wooden acting abilities (Lyle Waggonner, who later went on to play Steve Trevor on the *Wonder Woman* TV show, was also up for the part). Burt Ward played his partner, Robin, a "gosh-wow" character with a penchant for hitting his fist and proclaiming things like "Holy Corpuscles," "Holy Interplanetary Yardstick," and my favorite, "Holy Priceless Collection of Etruscan Snoods."







West and Ward were joined by Alan Napier as a dignified Alfred, Neil Hamilton as a befuddled Commissioner Gordon, Stafford Repp as Gordon's Irish sidekick Chief O'Hara, and Madge Blake as the new Aunt Harriet. Batman had a Batcave full of gadgets ranging from the snazzy Batmobile to Batzookas, Batpumps, Bat-Wax Solvents, and the Reverse Thermal Batlozenges.

Batman premiered on January 12, 1966, to a public primed for an event. As each story was a two-parter with cliffhangers, the series was aired twice a week. With its tilted camera angles, bright colors, and explosive "Biff!", "Bam!", "Pow!" effects, the series quickly caught on with kids, while their older siblings and parents enjoyed the absurd campiness and double entendres that popped up regularly. Even the simplistic *Batman* theme song, by Neal Hefti, made it into dance clubs and onto the music charts.

Part of the charm of the show was due to the guest roster of villains, all played by Hollywood stars. Caesar Romero was Joker, Burgess Meredith was Penguin, Frank Gorshin (and later John Astin) was the Riddler, and the slinky Catwoman was played by Julie Newmar, Lee Meriwether, and Eartha Kitt. Batman became a chic series on which to

ANDY MANGELS' HOLLYWOOD HEROES



guest-star, as seen in appearances by Joan Collins, Liberace, Jerry Lewis, Sammy Davis Jr., Don Ho, Ethel Merman, Art Carney, Dick Clark, Milton Berle, Rob Reiner, and Terri Garr, to name a few.

20th Century Fox filmed a 105-minute *Batman* feature film using the TV cast, which was released in August 1966. Joker, Penguin, Riddler, and Catwoman all banded together to defeat Batman and Robin, but even their combined villainy couldn't triumph over the Caped Crusader's goodness. The film's bigger budget also allowed the producers to build the Batboat, Batcopter, and Batcycle–expensive props later used for the series.

Batman, losing some steam by the end of its second season, needed a change for the third season. Producer Howie Horwitz decided to add the new version



of Batgirl from the comics. He made a 15-minute *Batgirl* pilot film, featuring Batman and Robin's first meeting with "the dominoed daredoll" as they fought against Killer Moth. Yvonne Craig, a pretty dancer, got the Batgirl role, as well as the heretofore unseen role as Commissioner Gordon's daughter, Barbara. The pilot was enough to convince ABC to sign up for one more season of *Batman* (now relegated to once a week). Curiously, the *Batgirl* pilot was never used in the show, but the footage makes the rounds among video collectors.

Despite the addition of Batgirl, the show ended March 14, 1968. When it looked as if no other network was interested in picking the show up, ABC bulldozed the $800,000 Batcave sets. Two weeks later, NBC offered to pick up *Batman* for a fourth season, but only if the sets were still standing. Ooops.

Batman went into syndication in September 1969, and Batmania began all over again. The series remains popular to this day, now showing on The Family Channel, and in almost every country in the world. No episodes are available on video, but the *Batman* feature film is.

ANIMATED BATS

While *Batman* was rising up the charts on ABC, Filmation was busy producing animated *Superman* and *Aquaman* stories over at CBS. In 1968, the *Superman-Aquaman Hour* became the *Batman-Superman Hour*, which ran new shows until 1969. Filmation's animation was stiff, but better than much of what was being produced.

Each half-hour *Batman* segment contained two *Batman* adventures. Both Batman and Alfred were given a voice by Olan Soule (a newscaster on two King Tut episodes of the live series), while not-yet-a-radio-star Casey Kasem was the voice of Robin. A pre-*Mary Tyler Moore* Ted Knight played almost all of the villains and Commissioner Gordon, while Jane Webb was Batgirl.

Seventeen half-hour shows were completed by the end of the first season when the show split off on its own as *The Adventures Of Batman and Robin*. This series later went into syndication until Warner pulled it in the mid 80s. One volume of



Batman cartoons is available on the Warner *Super Powers* label. Filmation also produced five short educational spots with Batman, Robin, Joker, and Penguin which ran on episodes of *Sesame Street*.

BATMAN: SUPER-FRIENDLY

In one of the oddest licensing moves, Batman and Robin next appeared in *The New Scooby-Doo Movies*, a CBS series animated by Hanna-Barbara. The series featured guest-stars by everyone from the Three Stooges to Sonny and Cher to the Harlem Globetrotters. The Dynamic Duo appeared in "The Caped Crusader Caper" in 1972, and in a later episode called "The Dynamic Scooby-Duo Affair." Hanna-Barbara's work with Batman on the *Scooby-Doo Movies* gave them practice for the future, as Batman joined with other heroes to found... The Super-Friends!

ABC wanted a superhero team for Saturday mornings, and *Super-Friends* fit the bill when it premiered on September 8, 1973. The hour-long show joined Batman and Robin with Superman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman and various guest-stars. The heroes were aided by/saddled with two teenagers Marvin and Wendy (Bruce Wayne's niece) and their cape-wearing canine, Wonder Dog. Batman's voice was once again provided by Olan Soule, while Casey Kasem performed double duty as Robin and the trouble Alert Computer.

SuperFriends evolved almost yearly, changing titles and formats as it went. Batman and Robin were in every episode, and later shows featured a few Bat-villains.

Adam West took over the voice of Batman, but Casey Kasem stayed on as Robin.

Unfortunately, none of the *SuperFriends* cartoons are in syndication or on videotape.

MEANWHILE. . . BAT-MITE?

SuperFriends wasn't the only place you could see animated adventures of Batman in the 1970s, nor ABC the only network. Unable to leave well enough alone, Filmation updated their earlier *Batman* series in 1977 for CBS. Sixteen episodes of the half-hour *New Adventures Of Batman* were animated, premiering February 12, 1977. CBS joined it with another show on September 10th, and the *Batman/Tarzan Adventure Hour* ran until the following year Several other new superheroes were added to the *Batman* and *Tarzan* reruns in *Tarzan And The Super 7*, premiering in 1978. The same show changed titles once more in 1980, before its demise in 1981

This new *Batman* series had some familiar aspects, such as the return of Adam West and Burt Ward to do the voices of their characters, though Melendy Britt took over Batgirl and Catwoman's voice and Lennie Weinrib played most of the other characters. An additional blast from the past was the impish Bat-Mite, an escapee from the 5th Dimension who the producers had rescued from sixties comic obscurity. Bat-Mite was played by the squeaky voice of Filmation head Louis Scheimer. The series has never been syn-



dicated, or released on videotape.

HOLY BAT GUANO!

TV Guide readers were surprised by an advertisement in the January 1979 issues. A new live-action *Batman* show with Adam West, Burt Ward, and Frank Gorshin? What gives?

What gave was a decision by NBC and Hanna-Barbara to produce two live-action superhero specials called *Legends of the Super-Heroes*. Not content to drag Batman and Robin through the camp grinder solo, they licensed out over a dozen of DC's heroes, heroines, and villains.

Legends of the Super-Heroes: The Challenge premiered on January 18. Batman and Robin were joined by Green Lantern Hawkman, Black Canary, Huntress, Captain Marvel, and Retired Man in a battle against a group of villains (such as Solomon Grundy, Dr. Sivana and Riddler) setting a doomsday bomb. The heroes were mainly first-time "actors" whose main requirement was to look good in a costume, while delivering lines so cheesy that the laugh track had more groans than guffaws

The second special, *Legends of the Super-Heroes: The Roast*, aired the following week, on January 25. If the first was embarrassing, this was bordering on humiliating. Ed McMahon hosted as the emcee at a superhero "roast" for Retired Man. Villains and guest-stars told bad jokes about the superheroes, and an embarrassing black stereotype, Ghetto Man, made his first and only appearance. The show was saved by two things: Ed McMahon gets beaten up by Solomon Grundy, and Robin befuddles Batman in a hilarious game of charades after wrecking the Batmobile.

The specials had a charm, though to say they were "so bad they were good" is definitely an overstatement. Needless to say, *Legends of the Super-Heroes* is not available on video, and it's forgotten by most history books. Even during the craze for Batman's 50th birthday in 1989, during which every Adam West appearance was rebroadcast to death, these gems didn't make anyone's schedule. They're owned by Ted Turner and the Cartoon Network.

If you think dragging West and Ward out of mothballs is weird, how about seeing their Filipino doubles singing and dancing? Sometime between 1978 and now, a very odd film was shot in the Phillipines by Regal Film Studios *Alyas Batman en Robin* is a salute

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to the campy 60s show. As near as I can tell (the film isn't subtitled), two men have daydreams of themselves as the Dynamic Duo. Odder still is that their enemies in real life seem to dress up as Joker and Penguin to go about their sinister business. The film ends with Batman singing a superhero version of *At The Hop*, during which Wonder Woman, Superman, a midget Spider-Man, and Robin Hood all boogie in the streets. The 102-minute video is available at some foreign language film stores from Regal International Inc. Needless to say, *Alyas Batman en Robin* has not been authorized by DC Comics.

BATFILMS ANYONE?

Following the success of the 70's *Superman* films, a big-budget *Batman* feature film was soon in discussion. October 3, 1979, producers Michael Uslan (who had written three issues of *Detective Comics* in 1975) and Ben Melniker signed the agreement with DC to do *Batman*. Forming BatFilm Productions, Inc. in the process, they announced that a film was being planned at Phil Seuling's comic con in New York in 1980.

They enlisted Tom Mankiewicz to write the screenplay based on Steve Englehart's excellent 70s *Batman* stories with Marshall Rogers. The first draft, dated April 17, 1982 (though Uslan remembers an earlier draft), contained Batman's origin, his confrontation with Joe Chill, Robin's origin, Commissioner and Barbara Gordon, and the villains of Joker, Penguin, and Rupert Thorne. By the second draft, January 10, 1984, the Penguin and Barbara Gordon had been dropped out of the story in an attempt to slightly simplify it. Directors Ivan Reitman and Joe Dante were in the running early for the job, but nothing seemed to go anywhere — then Tim Burton got interested.

On October 21, 1985, Burton (and Julie Hickson) turned in a treatment for *his Batman* film, a bizarre mishmash of previous scripts and the 60s TV show. Uslan and Melnicker had chosen Burton as director after several meetings and a special screening of *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*. It's in the Burton treatment that it is established that the Joker killed the Waynes, as well as the scenes of him releasing gas during a Gotham parade. He also



throws in Penguin, Riddler, and Catwoman as Joker's henchpeople, responsible for the murder of Dick Grayson's parents. Silver



St. Cloud and Rupert Thorne appear again, though almost as an afterthought.

Uslan and Melnicker moved to executive producers, while newer hotshots Peter Guber and Jon Peters took charge of production. Wanting Burton to concentrate on directing the film, they brought in little-known screenwriter Sam Hamm to write *Batman*. His script jettisoned most of the old stories, bringing back Vicki Vale and keeping the Joker as the only villain. He did include Robin's origin, as well as a sequence straight out of Frank Miller's *Dark Knight Returns*, where Batman gallops to battle astride a powerful horse. Hamm's first draft on October 20, 1986, was reworked several times before Warren Skaaren and Charles McKeown were brought aboard to fine-tune it.

Burton's casting choice of Michael Keaton as Batman brought howls of protest and letter-writing campaigns from the fans; it also brought Warner a tremendous amount of free publicity. *Everyone* knew that *Batman* was being filmed. The addition of Jack Nicholson as the Joker mollified some fans and excited the general public, while other stars lined up for roles, including Billy Dee Williams, Jack Palance, and Jerry Hall.

Sean Young was cast as Vicki Vale, but while practicing horse-riding scenes in England (where the film was shot) she fractured her collar-bone and was pulled from the film. At the last minute, Kim Basinger was brought in to replace her. Ricky Addison Reed, the young Canadian actor from *Return To Salem's Lot*, was let go from the film days before it started production. His part, Robin, was cut on Burton's orders.

Released in late 1989, *Batman* was a huge financial success, if only a modest critical success. Rumors began to fly immediately about who would or wouldn't be in the next film. Only Keaton and a handful of the supporting cast had contracts for future films. Sam Hamm was again hired to script the film, and his first draft in the fall of 1990 had Penguin and Catwoman framing Batman and turning the police against him, while Vicki Vale is rescued by an acrobatic street kid named Dick. Burton hated the script, and replaced Hamm with Dan Waters, whose *Heathers* was a dark comic masterpiece.

Waters' script, rewritten and "tweaked" by Wesley Strick, became the basis for *Batman Returns*. Annette Bening originally snagged the Catwoman role, but dropped out due to pregnancy. Sean Young, miffed that Burton hadn't asked her, staged a shocking blitz on the Warner Brothers lot, appearing in a homemade Catwoman costume, and going on several TV talk shows berating Burton for not casting her in the role. Despite Young's protests (or perhaps, spurred on by them) Burton quickly cast Michelle Pfeiffer in the Catwoman role. The Penguin was to be played by the man whom everyone had always expected would play him: Danny DeVito.

Another controversy dotted the film's casting. Though Warner denied Robin was in the film, Batman was assisted by a street kid named Dick, who had an "R" on his overalls. The role was to be played by Marlon Wayans. As seen on cast call sheets, Wayans was to begin filming his scenes just days before Burton once again decided to cut the role. Charges of racism were



levelled at Warner, as people assumed they were backing off from having a black Robin.

Released in 1992, *Batman Returns* was again a financial success, though fans and critics seemed to like it less. DeVito's Penguin overshadowed the film, dragging it (literally and figuratively) into Gotham's sewers. Everyone seemed to want to see more of Pfeifer's kinky Catwoman, something she told the press she'd be more than happy to accommodate if Warner came knocking.

DARK DECO

High on the success of the films, Warner sold Fox on the idea of a new *Batman* animated series, based more on the dark movie vision than on any previous senes. Watching a 90-second test pilot in which Batman slugs it out with some thugs on the roofs of Gotham, Fox took the bait, and Warner began work on *Batman: The Animated Series*.

Alan Burnett worked with Bruce Timm and Eric Radomski to develop a look for the series, which they dubbed "Dark Deco." Their *Batman* wasn't exactly Tim Burton's version, but one closer to the early dark days of the strip, as well as the early seventies stories. The animation was tremendous, harkening back to the superb Fleischer Studio *Superman* cartoons, unequalled in superhero animation since their first showing in 1941.



BAT TO THE FUTURE

With fifty years of celluloid behind him, what's coming up in Batman's future? Let's take a look into our Crystal Ball and see. Turn on the Bat-Signal so I can get a little more light, would you?

Fox has renewed *Batman: The Animated Series* all the way through the 1996-97 season, with Warner promising "a *minimum* of twenty new episodes" between now and 1997. That's twenty in addition to the five episodes from season one that they yanked at the last minute.

Though animated spin-off series for both *Catwoman* and *Robin* were discussed and worked on, the shows have been put on "indefinite hiatus."

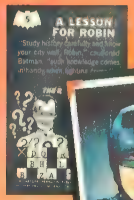
While waiting for word on the second season, Batman animators have been busy working on *Batman: The Animated Movie*.

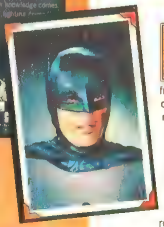
HEROIC

TRADING CARDS

BATMAN SPECIAL

By Mike Stokes

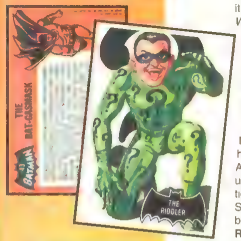




It is no secret that the creators of blockbuster movies have a tendency to further cash in on a film's popularity through merchandising. The studios love to sell movie tie-ins almost as much as the fans love to buy them.

Action figures, posters, lunchboxes, T-shirts, toilet paper--anything capable of exhibiting a familiar emblem or character likeness usually does

Batman the Movie set new records for merchandising, turning it into an art form. Not since *Star Wars* had a movie been responsible for redecorating so many bedrooms and retail store shelves. Whether it was Batman bedsheets or Catwoman mousetraps, anything that could be painted black and yellow was in demand



With a plethora of Batman items hitting the market, collectors had a hard time deciding where to begin. A number of cool, new Batman figures, vehicles, and other necessities hit the stores--even Rock-em, Sock-em Robots made a come-back hot on the heels of **Batman Returns** with the Caped Crusader duking it out with the Penguin.



However, in the wake of all this Batstuff, one of the classic forms of movie memorabilia, as well as one of the most traditional forms of collecting, made its way back onto dimestore shelves--Batman trading cards.

The bubble gum card kingpins at Topps got the ball rolling in 1989 with their first of two series of ***Batman the Movie*** trading cards and stickers. Further capitalizing on the premium trading card craze and another commercially successful Batman movie three years later, Topps took movie cards a step further and issued a Stadium Club set of **Batman Returns** cards to complement their regular set.

To further entice those leary of paying extra for a pack of premium cards, one Stadium Club card was included in each pack of regular cards. Once a complete set of the standard cards had been completed, collectors had already begun their set of Stadium Clubs without even knowing it.

While these movie sets are the first frame of reference for many of the younger Batmaniacs, these cards represented a welcome return for long-time Dark Knight hobbyists who hadn't bought a pack of Batman cards since several years before man set foot on the moon.

Then, like now, it was Topps hard at work churning out Batman cards over two decades before their return.

Various Topps sets from 1966 mark the cornerstone of many Batman enthusiasts' collections and mark a kindler, gentler era of the caped crusader.

One of the Topps 1966 Batman sets is comprised of artist renditions of the dynamic duo and many infamous villains. Bat-gadgets such as the Batarang and the Bat-Gasmask are also featured.

Marking this set is a black Bat Symbol with a short caption on the front of the cards, while the backs of the original 55-card edition feature a narrative of the scene depicted on the front of the card.

The 44-card sets feature similar artwork, but offer shorter narratives and puzzle pieces on the reverse sides. These sets, series A and B are also distinguishable from the first set by the color of the Bat Symbol on the front of the card. Series A cards have a red bat, while series B sports a blue bat.

The Batlaffs 55-card set features characters and scenes from the campy Adam West/Burt Ward ABC television series.

The reverse sides of these cards also contain puzzle pieces along with corny Bat-puns such as, "In school, most bats excel in--What else? MatheBATics.

Similar to the Batlaffs set, the valuable 38-card "Riddler-back" series consists of television series footage, but the black and white backs are graced by a riddle from the Riddler. To answer the baffling bad-guy's questions, a decoder must be placed over a series of letters to reveal the secret phrase.

Like the character, Batman trading cards have evolved since the '60s. This is best evidenced as Topps goes from the usual movie trading cards to the premium Stadium Club series.

These glossy cards feature movie scenes and a foil stamped front. The reverse is also glossy with behind-the-scenes photographs as well as historical Batman tidbits and movie facts

Batman cards continue their metamorphosis with the latest edition from *Batman the Animated Series*. These slick collectibles capture the essence of the series with their high quality animated reproductions. Scenes from the show as well as characters, vehicles, and items such as Batman's utility belt make up this set

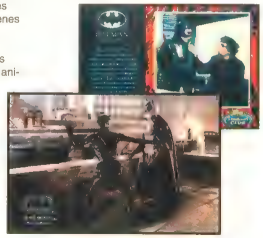
The backs of these cards feature another still-shot from the series along with narratives of the scenes or biographies of the featured characters.

An added feature of this set is the possibility of finding a vinyl animation cell in one of the foil-wrapped packages. There are approximately three of these cells in every 36 packages.

As the popularity of non-sports trading cards and the Dark Knight continues to grow, more of these high-quality sets can certainly be expected. New Batfans emerge every day, so look for the values of these items to increase both monetarily and sentimentally.

BATMAN TRADING CARDS

BATMAN		
Topps-1966		
Set (55)	90.00	130.00
Series A (44)	60.00	100.00
Series B (44)	65.00	110.00
BATMAN RIDDLER BACK		
Topps-1966		
Set (38)	150.00	180 00
BATMAN-BATLAFFS		
TOPPS-1966		
SET (55)	120.00	150.00
BATMAN THE MOVIE		
Topps-1989		
Ser 1 Set (132)	10.00	10.00
Ser 2 Stickers (22)	4.00	5 00
Ser 2 Set (132)	8.00	10.00
Ser 2 Stickers (22)	2.00	4.00
Set Series 1	30.00	32.00
Set Series 2	15.00	20.00
BATMAN RETURNS		
Topps-1992		
Set (88)	8.00	10.00
Stadium Club (10)	5.00	6.00
BATMAN RETURNS		
Zellers-1992		
Set (24)	10.00	12.00
BATMAN STADIUM CLUB		
Topps-1992		
Set (100)	10.00	18.00
BATMAN THE ANIMATED SERIES		
Topps-1993		
Set (100)	10.00	15.00
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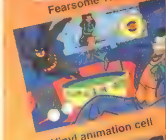


Batman Returns Stadium Club cards are extremely high quality.













How I Draw BATMAN

By Kelley Jones

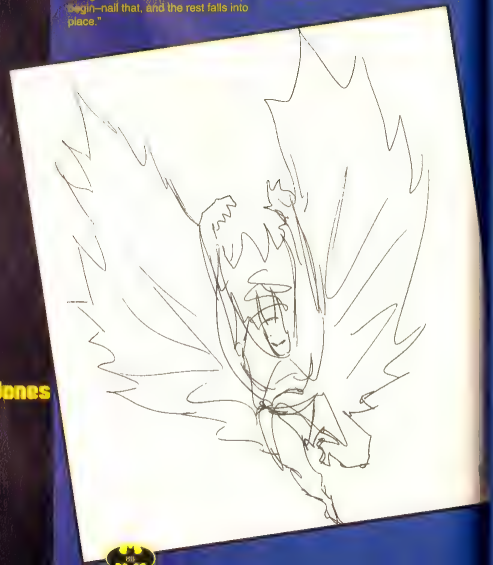
When we first approached Kelley on doing our "How to Draw Batman" pages, he was interested, but apprehensive. He draws the baddest Bat around, and here he tries to explain how to all of you budding artists.

Take it away Kelley!

(1) "Starting a page. Sure you can say that about any character in comics, but Batman is the most recognizable. So that's where I begin–nail that, and the rest falls into place."

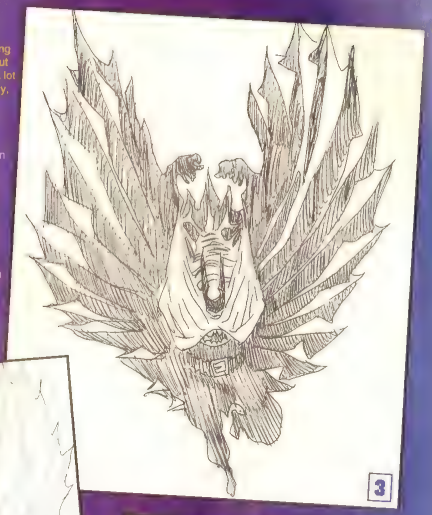
Kelley's first drawing shows that continues to what your [illegible] action [illegible] you're [illegible] you don't [illegible] a page with [illegible] and [illegible] Don't [illegible] to [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible]

(2) "Once I've settled on the [illegible] action, I go and sketch a rough [illegible] where his hands and feet fit best and how the cape (that's the whole angel) flows best."



[illegible] fighting [illegible] pick out [illegible] draw a lot [illegible] by the way, [illegible]

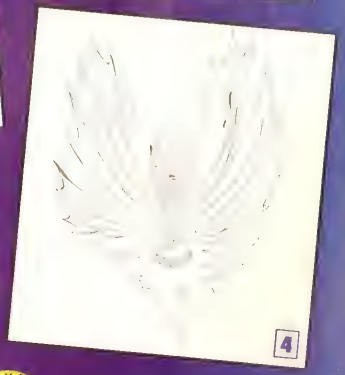
[illegible] Heck, I [illegible] drawing [illegible] include in [illegible] most [illegible] don't [illegible] or [illegible] don't [illegible] new thin [illegible] but [illegible] some- [illegible] equally [illegible] that you [illegible] because you [illegible] to do well [illegible] you enjoy or are [illegible] no matter what that [illegible]





(3) "And to lay the foundation [illegible]

[illegible] following along by this [illegible] well. Notice the [illegible] drawing. Don't [illegible] the lines do [illegible] Oftentimes by [illegible] how the results will [illegible] and natural





(5) "...sive, meaning bold strokes of ink and inking with the ... I'll put any given line or black placement. Don't be ... of cool stuff in there."

What do ... telling you ... doesn't mean to ... drawing ... come out ... experiment ... you should even ... toonist I know even inks with toothpicks to get the effect that you are looking for!



(6) "But if you do make an error, hit the white out. I use white out primarily to add, though; notice the cape, and I also ... the Bat symbol to white.

... like that ..."

— Kelley Jones

... but all ... paper; at ... ordinary guy, looking at comics and wishing he could make a living by drawing all of those cool superheroes. With enough practice (and a little natural born talent, of course) there are sure to be quite a few of you who could do what Kelley is doing. And if you want a place to start practicing, check out the contest below!

I CAN DRAW BATMAN, TOO!

Do you draw outstanding wings?
How about a killer cape?
If you do, then this is the contest you've been waiting for! To enter, send your best drawings of Batman to the accompanying address and if your art is chosen you can win a **Batman Annual #1**! Winners will be printed in the regular edition of HERO Illustrated magazine. So get those drawings together and enter today!

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SEPTEMBER 10-12	SAN FRANCISCO, CA	MALL AT NORTHGATE
SEPTEMBER 17-19	CHICAGO, IL	WOODFIELD MALL
SEPTEMBER 24-26	MINNEAPOLIS, MN	MALL OF AMERICA
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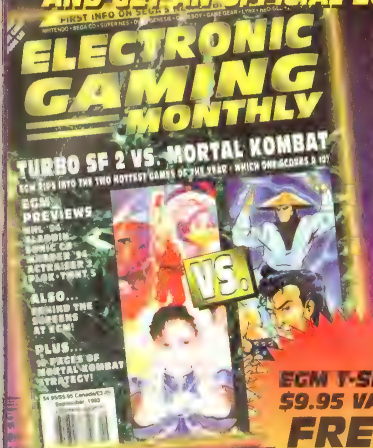
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CIRCLE #126 ON READER SERVICE CARD

GO FIGURE!

BATMAN SPECIAL

THE AUTHORITY ON ACTION FIGURES, KITS AND COLLECTIBLE TOYS

By Frank Kurtz

How popular is Batman? Maybe one way to gauge how popular or well-known a character is is to count how many different action figures have been done of him over the years. Batman and his friends and foes have a mill on the American psyche that may only be matched by the likes of Superman or Mickey Mouse.

Listed below is a very personal assemblage of the coolest Batman action figure toys. You will notice that I have excluded a few (like the Toy Biz figures). That's because they're pretty much or just not appealing. My intention is to show not the best. Still, these are my personal feelings on the stuff, and I leave it to you to straighten me out.





THE VAGUELY MILITARY *CAPTAIN ACTION* BECAME ALL OF YOUR FAVORITE HEROES, INCLUDING BATS.

CAPTAIN ACTION

Ideal, 1966-1968

In a bid to take part of the market that was dominated for G.I. Joe, Ideal developed Captain Action, a toy line that could become your favorite superhero by changing the individual costume packs sold separately.

The costumes included a suit, accessories and a full face mask that fit over Cap's to create the new character. Costumes that were available were Batman, Superman, Capt. America, Aquaman, the Phantom, Steve Canyon, Sgt. Fury, Lone Ranger, Flash Gordon, Spider-Man, Buck Rogers, Tarzan, and Green Hornet. The suit itself are extremely hard to find and command high prices.

Cap also had a young assistant called Action Boy who had three costumes: Robin, Superboy, and Aquaman. They also command high prices.

The Batman suit came with full face mask, boots, cape, and his utility belt including grappling hook and line, drill, flashlight, and the batarang. The suit alone can get about $400.00 to $600.00.

OFFICIAL WORLD'S GREATEST SUPERHEROES!

Mego 1972-1978

The Mego Batman was the first true Batman action figure. Each Mego doll (regardless of manufacturer or otherwise) stood about 8 inches high, had jointed legs and arms, a rubber head and a nylon suit. Batman, one of the among the first batch of heroes to be released and would continue to be produced until the line folded in the mid-seventies. Batman and Robin were initially released with removable masks. Given how easy and likely it was for the masks to be lost, Mego changed the molds so that the masks were permanently attached (not unlike the current Jordi figure in the Star Trek: The Next Generation set from Playmates).

To complement the heroes, a line of villains was also introduced from which Batman's foes were dominant.

The line would be so popular that additional heroes and villains were added, including Marvel characters. Other marginal characters like Tarzan, Conan, and Isis were added as well.

Among the over a hundred figures in the line are some of the hardest



IT LOOKS LIKE THE DC HERO CONVENTION IS IN TOWN. KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR FEZES AND LITTLE CARS.

THE BEST BAT-ACTION FIGURES!



WHILE THERE WAS A WIDE VARIETY OF DC HERO FIGURES AVAILABLE, WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS THE VILLAINOUS FIGURES WERE DOMINATED BY BAT-BADDIES. BATGIRL STOPPED BY TO HELP THE PENGUIN FIND A BETTER TIE.



IT'S THE ROCK-'EM-SOCK-'EM FIST FIGHTING MEGO FIGURES SLAPPING AROUND THEIR FOES. "HEY, HE KNOCKED MY BLOCK OFF!"

action figures to find. Through an exclusive deal with Wards, Mego produced four secret identity action figures. The figures were dressed like normal people and did not include the suits of their superhero personas. The four figures were Bruce Wayne, Dick Grayson, Clark Kent and Peter Parker. Each figure sells as much as $300.00 to $450.00 apiece. The fact that they don't look like much of anything may account for their scarcity.

In 1975, Mego released their "Kung Fu Fighting" figures. Their head a push button on the back which caused them to punch. The figures were Batman, Robin, Joker and Penguin.

Mego continued to try to expand their market share by producing a line of 12-inch tall G.I. Joe-like figures. Of the DC characters only Batman was produced in this line.

Additional products for the 8 inch figure line included the Batmobile, a Batcycle, a Wildfire Bat Lair, and the Batwing. There was also a Batcave playset for all your heroes to hang out in.



OU HAD BETTER BE GOOD OR I'LL KNOCK YOUR LIGHTS OUT!

SUPER POWERS COLLECTION

Kenner 1984-1986

It's my personal opinion that this was by far the best superhero action figure line ever created. The Batman figure was the best of them all as well. Why stop there? Joker, Penguin and Robin look great, too. For accuracy of design and proportion these figures can't be beat.

While the size figure is mature sure was at the time they were rather stunning. The overall detail compared to previous figures made them shine.

Each figure had what was called the "power action" function. By either depressing a leg or arm, you could get the figure to perform some kind of punch or kick by other weapon moves. Batman got the "Bat Punch". Robin gave out a Karate chop. The villain came with a "Blast Master" that he could swing down on some



HI. BE GOOD AND I'LL BE YOUR BEST PAL IN THE WORLD.

GO FIGURE: BAT-FIGURES!



THE PENGUIN GETS A BETTER TUX FROM KENNER WHILE JOKER AND MR. FREEZE LOOK ON, PLEASED WITH THEIR OWN DUDS

spor victim's head. The Penguin would bop you with his umbrella. While the Joker's action was very good, the Penguin was disappointing because the roundness of the figure prevented wide swings of the umbrella. Later, a newly designed Mr. Freeze was added to the line which had the "Cold Blast Punch."

Among the accessories for the heroes that would be bought were the Batmobile and Batcopter.

Prototypes for another wave of figures were created including Supergirl, Batgirl, Swamp Thing (which may have ended up part of the Swamp Thing series), Blue Beetle, Solomon Grundy, and Nightwing. Unfortunately, they have never been seen again with the one exception.

Molds for these figures and more were later picked up by Toy Biz and sub-standard figures followed. The less said about them the better.



FROM BALDING SOCIALITE TO PLASTIC-CLOTHED CRIME FIGHTER

THE DARK KNIGHT COLLECTION

Kenner 1990-1991

Once Kenner got the rights to the Batman line, they attempted to wash away the bad taste left over from the Toy Biz DC Heroes line. The figures were superior, but suffered from Batman overkill since almost the whole line was made up of variations of the Batguy. The Joker appeared, though. Probably the coolest figure was the Bruce Wayne Quick Change. Bruce looks like Michael Keaton, too. Most figures ended up in the *Batman Returns* line to follow.

COOL BAT-FIGURES THAT AREN'T REALLY ACTION FIGURES

Currently on the market are a few cool items that Bat-fans should take note of. While they don't qualify as actual action figures they are worth scooping up for their overall quality and visual appeal.

ERTL BATMAN THE ANIMATED SERIES METAL FIGURES AND VEHICLES

These figures are available in large store chains that sell action figures and are usually placed near those same figures. The Metal figures include two versions of Batman, Robin, Joker, Penguin and Catwoman. These figures are full, painted and true to the series. The vehicles are "Hot Wheels" sized. Each figure comes exactly from the TV counterpart but on a much smaller scale.



HORIZON JOKER KIT

This may be the best kit ever done of the Joker. Sculptor Tadahiro Kiya captures the [illegible] nature of the Clown Prince Of Crime in a figure that remains [illegible] Also worth looking for is a [illegible] of the Batman Penguin [illegible]





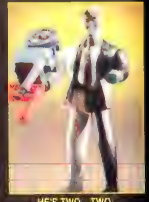
DON'T YOU DARE CALL HIM SPACE GHOST!

BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES

Kenner 1992-present



For just coolness, nothing can beat this new series. They look exactly like their animated counterparts. I'm a purist and prefer the basic Batman, but that rocket pack figure with the Rocketeer helmet is pretty cool. This line has the absolute best versions done of The Riddler and Two-Face. I also think it has the coolest Batmobile ever created, bar none. The next batch should be on its way in the fall including Scarecrow, Catwoman, and possibly Mr. Freeze. In years to come, this is the line that superhero action figures may be compared to (even though I have to admit that the new batch of X-Men figures is starting to look good).



HE'S TWO... TWO... TWO BAD GUYS IN ONE.

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BATMAN:

FROM COMIC BOOK PAGES TO VIDEO GAME SCREENS



The Batman movie back in 1989 had a great impact on fans and created a huge demand for any related Batman products. The amount of paraphernalia that came out after it was astounding. Action figures, toy Batmobile cars, mugs, insibles, non-sports cards, and maybe popsicles for all we know, have all joined in the marketing scheme. And wouldn't you know it, they came out with a video game based on the summer motion picture blockbuster.

The first game to jump the gun was Batman for the Nintendo Entertainment System or NES, for short. Like the movie, this became an instant hit with villains like the Joker and his evil horde of henchmen. The game took after the movie as far as the scenery, which came pretty close the scenes in the movie. The Genesis version followed soon after with better graphics and sound.

Although they were not movie sequels, Batman: Return of the Joker was released for both the NES and Genesis in hopes that the success of the previous games would sell well. ROJ is much like the Batman games before, it but with a new shooter level.

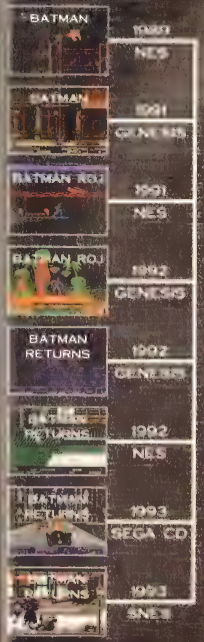
After much marketing hype, *Batman Returns* turned out to be the biggest film of 1992. Enter the video game. This was released on all the major video game formats. Konami and Sega bought the rights to develop the games.

With the third Batman film in preproduction, you can bet your cookies that video gamers will see another Batman game in the near future.

BATMAN VIDEO GAME TIMELINE

Many video game versions have been made since the release of the first Batman movie in 1989.

Batman came out for the NES a few months after the movie, with more titles coming out in succession. Each new game borrows a little from the Batman story. His actions, such as the way he fights and uses his weapons, have been translated into the video games.



BATMAN

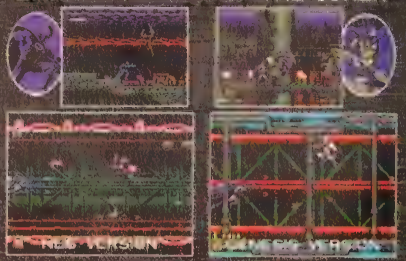


The first of many video game appearances for the Dark Knight was Batman for the NES. The Genesis version was released shortly after. Both video games were based on the successful Batman movie from the previous year.

These cartridges employed the same punch and kick techniques found in many action fighting games. The play mechanics have been enhanced with the use of Batman's awesome weapons. Throw numerous Batarangs toward oncoming enemies, fill the bad guys full of lead with a gun, or just stick them with a load of ninja stars.

Remember that these incredible weapons are not infinite and that you have to collect certain icons to replenish your supply. Practice makes perfect to reach the end.

BATMAN: RETURN OF THE JOKER



The Joker comes back from the dead and vows vengeance against his arch enemy.

Batman: Return of the Joker for both the NES and Sega Genesis are much the same game, except for the graphics. The graphics have improved from the first release, and Batman and the enemies have been programmed to be bigger in size.

The major change these cartridges have made are in the game play. Instead of attacking the enemies with a punch or kick, Batman has been equipped with various guns with super destructive capabilities. Destroy boxes are scattered throughout the levels. They contain an icon you can shoot to change the type of gun you want to fire.

Fans of shooter games will like the new level which borrows from many space shooting games where Batman flies around killing enemies.

BATMAN RETURNS

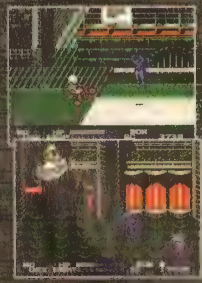
NES VERSION



Although it is an 8-Bit system, the NES version of Batman Returns is an exception when compared to the other video systems.

Konami, the company that programmed this fantastic game, has taken great care to create a game that plays as well as it looks. This is the cream of the Batman crop for the old NES, sporting the best graphics out of all the 8-Bit Batman titles.

This cartridge takes scenes from the movie, as well as other new scenes, and places them into the video game. Fight it out with the Red Triangle Gang just outside of Max Shreck's office building or take them on inside where more of the Gang await the Caped Crusader. Beware around the corners.



GENESIS VERSION



Sega, one of the home video giants, takes the Batman Returns motion picture and adds some of the coolest graphics around.

The game begins on the rooftops of Gotham City where members of the Red Triangle Gang are poised to stop the Caped Crusader. As Batman, you can slide down angled rooftops and swing across long gaps. Catwoman will be waiting at the end of the level. Watch out, as she is very agile and will jump to avoid you. She will also use her whip when you're facing the wrong way.

Other levels include an old not-so-abandoned building, city sewers, a carnival, and a circus train. Be prepared for anything — these guys mean business.



As with the comics and movie industry, video games are also prone to have a sequel made for successful titles.

The second Batman film has been translated for play on almost every video game system from the old NES to the Sega CD. This game cartridge follows the adventures of the Dark Knight from the film.

It begins with the hero being framed by The Penguin as he pushes the ice Princess off the office building of Max Shreck, an evil businessman. Now Batman must capture the evil bird to clear his name.

Each video game version of Batman Returns contains all the villains from the motion picture. Catwoman and The Penguin make formidable Bosses with their relentless attacks. The members of the Red Triangle Gang hide throughout the streets of Gotham City and will stop at nothing to make life hard for the Caped Crusader.

The graphics are very good for each video game system with excellent game play. Gamers will notice the fantastic Batman music theme, especially the tracks on the Sega CD. No matter what system you own, each game is great.

SUPER NES VERSION





Konami, the creators of the NES version, have made great strides to improve their already good Batman Returns title. Moving over to the Super NES platform, this game has made incredible graphic improvements with the Super NES. If not for the Sega CD unit, this game would have the best music out of all of them. This cartridge has excellent percussion and stringed instrumental music for each level.

The scenes are similar to the NES version, but with superior graphics. An added scene is the driving sequence, similar to the one from the Sega CD. It is one of the best driving scenes made from a cartridge game, but it's still not as good as the Sega CD version. Drive on to victory!

SEGA CD VERSION





Sega takes their first release of Batman Returns and makes some improvements. Not only is the cartridge version in this CD game, but there is an awesome Driving Mode between the action levels as well. You can also configure the game to play action scenes only, driving scenes only, or a complete game.

The driving scenes are the best of any video game. They're even as good as the arcade. The streets will scale and warp below your car just like you're driving. The city scenes will zoom smoothly past as you drive by them. Take on the Red Triangle Gang and knock them off their motorcycles or blast them with the Batmobile's flying discs and missiles. Also watch for road blocks!

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HHIK2

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE...

BATMAN PRICE GUIDE

The *HERO PRICE GUIDE* you now hold in your hands is one of the most interactive, accurate, and up-to-date listings of its kind. Thousands of hours were spent gathering and compiling the data contained within the following forty pages to deliver a price guide that addresses the needs and concerns of both casual and avid collectors alike.

The HERO PRICE GUIDE has been designed to offer you the most honest appraisals of your collections from dozens of actual comic book retailers around the country. HERO has carefully selected some of the best sources for back-issue information as well as regular comic book stores, like the ones you visit, to create a listing that is not only representative of current market values and trends, but also supplies a price frame within which the value of your comics can be judged.

The methods used by some price guide publications that supply a single valuation for titles based on a limited or infrequent polling of current market reaction are simply not accurate. The HERO PRICE GUIDE presents values in a bracketed format that compensates for many of the regional and time-sensitive variables that take place. While any price guide will be plagued with problems, only HERO employs a special system and interactive format to attack these problems head-on. All prices are representative of comics in "Near-Mint" condition.

This price guide, and any price guide contained within *Hero Illustrated*, are fairly-based listings created to give the reader an idea of what specific comics or related materials could be purchased for at the time this issue went to press. *Hero Illustrated* does not operate comic retail stores and does not sell, or purchase for resale, any comic or comic-related material, and this is not a catalog listing of prices we will buy or sell comics for. The Low and High prices do NOT represent "buy" and "sell" values. They are the low and high range of retail prices that reflect what anyone could expect to pay for that issue in a comic store. Some stores may charge more or less than the prices listed.

If you have information that the prices contained within this price guide are not in line with what you have seen or purchased a comic for, please let us know.

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Company
Issue #
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High Retail
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Image
1 6.00 10.00
2 4.00 6.00
1.50

DETECTIVE #575



HERO TIP:

Publisher:	DC
Issue No.:	#575
Writer:	Mike Barr
Artist:	Alan Davis
Inker:	Paul Neary
Cover Price:	75¢
Current Low Price:	$10.00
Current High Price:	$15.00

Overview: Batman: Year Two begins as DC plays with mini-series within a series. Devil's final seed on the book.

HERO RATING: ★★

H.I. PICK

The first of a four issue mini-series. Todd McFarlane took up reign with #576, but the new breed of McFarlane collectors have a tendency to bag first, read later (if ever), so the fact that this is part one makes little difference.

DEALER PICK

"Batman Year Two's story wasn't as good as Year One, and I liked the art less. Mainstream fans still love this story, though they won't pay for it...Great reader, beginning of Year Two, good potential. Knightfall series seems to show that customers enjoy a "Darker Batman."

Title: The name of the comic

Fact-File Info: who was the publisher, the art & writing team, cover price and current value

Overview: Background on storyline

HERO "Potential" Rating - Is this good or what? ★ = Why? ★★★★★ = Yow! I'm bumin'

HERO Pick - what does the HERO Research staff think?

Dealer Pick - what are store owners saying?

BATMAN PRICE GUIDE

HOW TO ENTER THE HERO COMIC CONTESTS:

Throughout the HERO price guide you'll find some great contests that give you the opportunity to win some super prizes and classic comics from days gone by.

Almost every page in this price guide has a contest to win very cool prizes. The trick is to send in your non-winning HERO GOLD CARD, and we will enter you into all of the contests without a hitch! That's right! You do a whole lot of nothing and we'll give you the chance to win all sorts of nifty items! Each of the contests will have a few very difficult questions as well, that you can answer for a chance at a set of HERO Platinum Premiere Editions! Also, the person that gets all the answers right for a single issue, and we mean all, will also get their name in lights in the next issue of HERO as "Hero King Extraordinaire"!

As is the case with any HERO contest, send your contest entries along with your name, address and phone number) to:

HERO CONTESTS
1657 Central Avenue
Suite 230
Lombard, IL 60148

Remember: these contests are void where prohibited and that HERO and its staff or their immediate families are not eligible. Also, HERO is not responsible for weather, sunspots, nuclear wars or other events which may prevent your entry from getting to us on time. Only one prize winner per contest unless otherwise noted. But you can enter as many times as you have non-winning HERO GOLD CARDS for, or you can enter the contests individually by sending the correct answers on a postcard. We'll even send out the comics in brand-spanking new Showcase Sealers so you can proudly display your winnings.

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127 Joker	125.00	125.00
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ARKHAM ASYLUM HARD COVER



HERO TIP:

Publisher:	DC
Issue No.:	One shot
Writer:	Grant Morrison
Illustrator:	Dave McKean
Cover Price:	24.95
Current Low Price:	17.00
Current High Price:	30.00

Overview: Batman must go into Arkham Asylum to rescue hostages from his most psychotic villains

HERO RATING: ★★★

H.I. PICK

This is a book that is made to be read. It is unusual for hardcover graphic novels to really skyrocket in price, but that shouldn't deter Batman fans and collectors from buying this one. Just because the price hasn't taken off, don't ignore this great book!

DEALER PICK

"Awesome, extremely well written book. A must have for Batman fans. This should be worth more than it is.. A great read but low on investment. Sales were fast then dead as a doornail. Plenty of supply but no interest, sells at cover price...Sold very well at cover price."

BATMAN PRICE GUIDE

HERO CONTEST #$100



ARKHAM ASYLUM HARD COVER

This is one of the classics of modern day comic storytelling and has redefined the way we all look at Batman. If you want a copy of the *first printing* of this choice book all you have to do is send in your non-winning HERO GOLD card to the address on the previous page. In the meantime tackle these trivia questions:

1. In what book was the term "The Dark Knight" first used?

2. What is the real name of Robin in this book?

3. Who dies in this mini-series of graphic novels?

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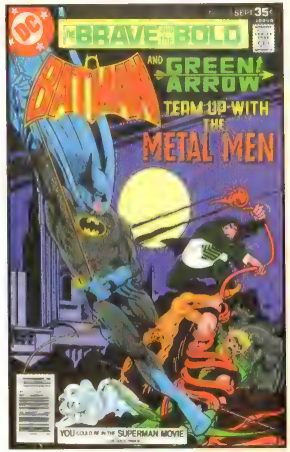
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BATMAN MOVIE SPECIAL
DC

	4.00	4.00
Deluxe	5.00	5.00

BATMAN AND THE OUTSIDERS
DC Comics

1-32	1.00	1.50
Annual 1	1.00	1.00

BATMAN PENGUIN TRIUMPHANT
DC
5.00 5.00

BATMAN RED RAIN
DC

HC	40.00	50.00
TPB	10.00	10.00

BATMAN RETURNS
DC

Deluxe	6.00	6.00

BATMAN: RUN RIDDLER RUN
DC Comics
5.00 5.50

BATMAN SEDUCTION OF THE GUN
DC
5.00 5.00

BATMAN: SHADOW OF THE BAT
DC Comics

1 Newsstand	2.00	2.50
1 Bagged	3.00	4.50
2-15	2.00	2.50
Annual 1	3.50	3.50



BATMAN SON OF THE DEMON
DC

HC	55.00	75.00
TPB	14.00	14.00

BATMAN SPECIAL 1
DC
5.00 5.00

BATMAN THE CULT #1

HERO TIP:



Publisher: DC
Issue No.: #1
Writer: Jim Starlin
Artist: Berni Wrightson
Colorist: Bill Wray
Cover Price: 3.50
Current Low Price: 6.00
Current High Price: 10.00

Overview: Batman and Robin try to save Gotham from a cult of wimps that are trying to take over the city

HERO RATING: ★★★

H.I. PICK

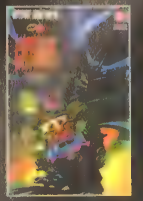
There are really mixed reviews for this one. Most people don't seem to care for the story much, though some give Wrightson extra credit for the art. The price may continue to go up because of the notable Starlin and Wrightson team-up.

DEALER PICK

"No one cares. Personally I liked the story; I like the art too. General consensus is that Wrightson just "stroked it"...Easily the Dumbest Batman story ever!...A shoddy imitation of the "The Dark Knight Returns"...Great reader Wrightson draws a great Batman...Great potential as more young people discover Wrightson art."

BATMAN PRICE GUIDE

HERO CONTEST #$200



JUDGMENT ON GOTHAM

Here's your chance to win a copy of the awesome Batman/Judge Dredd crossover. All you have to do is answer the question below and pray that your's is the card pulled out of the multitudes that may show up if people are feeling intellectually enlightened.

Okay, here it comes. Everyone knows that Judge Dredd is an import from Europe. What language were the original Judge Dredd comic books written in? And to keep things interesting, there will be extra points for those who send in their answers in that language.

BATMAN: SWORD OF AZRAEL
DC Comics

1		
2		
3		
4		
Tpb	9.95	9.95



BATMAN: VENGEANCE OF BANE
DC Comics

1	16.00	30.00
2	3.00	7.00

BATMAN VS. PREDATOR
DC Comics

1 Prestige	7.00	10.00
1 Newsstand	6.00	7.00
2 Prestige	6.00	6.50
2 Newsstand	4.00	5.00
3 Prestige	5.00	7.00
3 Newsstand	6.00	7.00

BRAVE AND THE BOLD
DC Comics

1	1100.00	1100.00
2	430.00	430.00
3	230.00	230.00
4	240.00	240.00
5	265.00	265.00
6-10	180.00	180.00
11-22	140.00	140.00
23	185.00	185.00
24	140.00	140.00
25	200.00	200.00
26-27	125.00	150.00
28	1800.00	2000.00
1st Justice League of America		
29-30 JLA	960.00	960.00
31	100.00	100.00
32-33	90.00	90.00
34	750.00	750.00
1st Hawkman		
35-36 Hawkman	220.00	220.00
37	115.00	115.00
38-39	100.00	100.00
40	73.00	73.00
41	72.00	72.00
42 Hawkman	110.00	110.00
43 Hawkman	130.00	130.00
44 Hawkman	110.00	110.00
44-46	27.00	27.00
47	28.00	28.00
48-49	27.00	27.00
50	75.00	75.00
Team-up issues begin		
51	42.00	42.00
52	32.00	32.00
53	24.00	24.00
54	160.00	175.00
1st Teen Titans		
55-56	15.00	15.00
57	83.00	83.00
1st Metamorpho		
58	36.00	36.00
Metamorpho		
59-60	57.00	57.00
61-62	30.00	30.00
63	11.00	11.00
64	42.00	42.00
65	8.50	8.50
66	9.00	9.00
67	23.00	23.00
68	37.00	37.00
69-71	15.00	15.00
72-78	14.00	14.00
79	25.00	25.00
80-82	21.00	21.00
83	33.00	33.00
84	20.00	20.00
85-86	21.00	21.00
87-92	8.00	8.00
93	18.00	18.00
94	8.00	8.00
95-100	7.00	7.00
100	18.00	18.00
101	5.00	5.00
102	6.50	6.50
103-110	5.00	5.00
111	10.00	10.00
112-117	7.00	7.00
118	10.00	10.00
119-128	3.00	3.00
129-130	12.00	12.00
131-140	3.00	3.00
141	10.00	10.00
142-190	4.00	4.00
191	7.50	7.50
192-199	4.00	4.00
200	9.00	9.00



CATWOMAN
DC Comics

1	1.95	1.95
Limited Series		
1	6.00	10.00
2	4.00	7.00
3-4	2.00	5.00



CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS
DC Comics

1	5.00	5.00
2-6	3.50	3.50
7	6.00	6.00
Death of Supergirl		
8 Death of Flash	7.50	10.00
9-11	2.50	2.50
12	6.00	6.00

DETECTIVE COMICS
DC Comics

225	2400.00	2500.00
1st App. Martian Manhunter		
226	500.00	550.00
2nd App. Martian Manhunter		
227-229	250.00	300.00
230	300.00	350.00
1st App. Mad Hatter		
231-232	130.00	190.00
233	700.00	750.00
Origin & 1st App. Batwoman		
234	130.00	190.00
235	290.00	340.00
Origin of Batman and his costume		
236	180.00	215.00
237-240	130.00	190.00
241-260	115.00	145.00
261	100.00	116.00
262-264	100.00	116.00
265	145.00	180.00
Origin of Batman retold		
267	100.00	120.00
Origin & 1st App. Batmite		
266,268-270	100.00	116.00
271	100.00	116.00
Origin of Martian Manhunter retold		
272	65.00	83.00
273	73.00	80.00
274-280	69.00	77.00
281	59.00	63.50
282-297	59.00	63.50
298	86.00	92.75
1st Modern Clayface		
299-300	35.00	37.25
301	38.75	41.00
Manhunter returns to Mars		
302-326	30.00	32.00
327	30.00	37.00
1st New Batman look		
328	52.50	58.00
Death of Alfred		
329-330	30.00	32.00
331	21.50	23.60
332	25.00	27.40
333-340	21.50	23.60
341	25.00	27.40
342-358	21.50	23.60
359	25.30	28.00
Intro & origin of new Batgirl		
360-364	21.50	23.60
365 Joker	25.00	27.40
366-368	21.50	23.60
369	30.00	33.20
Neal Adams art, 2nd App Silver Age Catwoman		
370	21.50	23.60
371	15.20	16.60
1st New Batmobile from TV show		
372-386	11.00	13.40
387	29.00	30.00
Reprints Detective #27		
388	15.20	18.50
389-390	11.00	13.40
391-394	8.00	9.65
395	14.50	16.00
396	8.00	9.65
397	14.50	16.00
Adams art		
398-399	8.00	9.65
400	22.00	29.00
1st App. Man-Bat, Neal Adams art		
401	8.75	10.00
402,404	14.30	16.50
Adams art		
403,405-406	8.75	10.00
407-408	14.30	16.50
Adams art		
409	8.75	10.00
410	15.20	16.30
Adams art		
411-420	9.00	9.65
421-436	7.90	8.85
437	11.50	12.35
New Manhunter, Simonson art & story		
438-445	9.70	10.15
446-456	6.80	7.15
457	6.80	7.15
Origin retold and updated		
458-460	6.80	7.15
461-465	5.00	5.50
466-468	10.90	12.30
469-470	5.00	5.50
471-474	10.90	12.30
475-476	20.00	22.00
477	15.00	16.00







BATMAN/ GRENDEL #1

Publisher:	DC
Issue No.:	#1
Writer:	Matt Wagner
Artist:	Matt Wagner
Colorist:	Matt Wagner
Cover Price:	$4.95
Current Low Price:	$4.95
Current High Price:	$4.95



HERO TIP:

Overview: The long awaited team-up of two of the grimmest characters in comics.

HERO RATING: ★★★★

H.I. PICK

A lot of people waited a long time for this book to happen, and most seem to be pleased with the end result. Particularly in the short term, this book holds a lot of potential, especially considering the popularity of Batman right now.

DEALER PICK

"Pretty book, typical confusing Matt Wagner. Sells well...A really bizzare story meant only for mature readers. Not a good investment...Great book, customers that buy it love it. Potential probably good due to lower print run...Two great features...This collection is appealing to a wide audience."

BATMAN PRICE GUIDE

HERO CONTEST #$300



SON OF THE DEMON HARD COVER

To win this ultra-cool copy of the Son of the Demon Hardcover, just tell us, in 25 words or less, why you want to be Batman. Is it because of the Batmobile (face it, you've always wanted to drive it, haven't you?) or because of the nifty threads he gets to fight crime in? Whatever the case, you tell us, and even though we can't do anything about it, we can at least send you a nice Batman book to read on those long, cold winter nights when the real superheros are out keeping the world safe, and all you can do is stay at home and fantasize about it.



501-503	3.50	5.00
504 Joker	5.00	7.00
505-506	5.00	7.00
507-523	4.00	5.00
524	5.00	6.25
2nd App. Jason Todd		



(cameo)		
525	3.50	5.00
3rd App. Jason Todd		
526	10.00	12.00
500th App. Batman		
527-531	2.50	3.00
532	5.00	6.00
533-534	2.50	3.00
535	5.00	6.00
New Robin (Jason Todd)		
536-564	3.00	4.00
565-568	2.40	3.00
569-570	5.00	6.00
571	2.40	3.00
572	3.25	4.00
50th Anniversary of Detective Comics		
573	2.40	3.00
574	5.00	5.25
Origin of Batman & Jason		

Adams, Marshall Rogers art		
478-479	10.00	12.00
Rogers art		
480	6.00	7.00
481	9.00	10.00
Rogers art		
482	6.50	8.00
Starlin, Russell, & Golden art		
483	6.50	8.00
40th Anniversary, origin retold		
484-499	4.00	4.50
500	6.00	8.00
New Hawkman story by Kubert, Batman & Deadman team-up		





Todd retold		
575	10.00	15.00
Year 2 begins, Alan Davis art		
576-578	10.00	12.00
McFarlane art		
579-597	1.50	2.00
598	4.50	6.75
Blind Justice by Sam Hamm		
599	4.00	4.25
600	3.00	5.00

601-605	1.50	2.00
606-610	1.50	1.75
611-626	1.25	1.50
627	2.00	3.75
Batman's 600th App. in Detective Comics		
628-655	1.25	1.50
656	1.25	8.00
657	4.00	8.00
658	3.00	8.00
Sam Kieth cover		
659	6.00	8.00
Knightfall part 2		
660	3.00	6.00
661	1.00	4.00
662-664	1.25	1.25
Annual 1	5.00	5.50
Annual 2	4.00	4.25
Annual 3-4	1.75	2.40
Annual 5	2.50	3.00
Sam Keith cover, Joker		

JOKER, THE
DC Comics

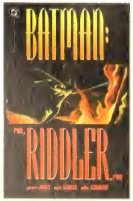
1	20.00	25.00
2-3	7.50	18.00
4-6,9	5.50	10.00
7-8	4.50	10.00

JUSTICE LEAGUE
DC Comics

1	4.50	8.00
Batman becomes part of new Justice League, leaves and joins periodically		
2	3.00	4.50
3	2.00	3.00



3	50.00	85.00
Test cover		
4	2.00	4.00
5	2.00	4.00
Batman vs. Guy Gardner		
6-7	2.00	4.00
8-10	2.50	2.50
11-23	1.25	1.50





JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA
DC Comics

1	1500.00	1500.00
Batman starts in the group then appears periodically		
2	430.00	430.00
3	350.00	350.00
4	270.00	270.00
5	190.00	190.00
6-8,10	150.00	150.00
9	250.00	250.00
11-15	120.00	120.00
16-20	90.00	90.00
21	170.00	200.00
1st JSA X-over		
22	140.00	140.00
23-28	45.00	45.00
29-30	53.00	53.00
31	30.00	30.00
32	28.00	28.00
33	24.00	24.00
34	30.00	30.00
35-36	23.00	23.00
37-38	44.00	44.00
39	25.00	25.00
40-41	22.00	22.00
42-45	15.00	15.00
46	45.00	45.00
47-48	20.00	20.00
49-54	11.00	11.00
55	22.00	22.00
56	17.00	17.00
57,59-60	11.00	11.00
58	12.00	12.00
61-66	9.00	9.00
67	10.00	10.00
68-72	9.00	9.00
73-74	5.50	5.50

24	1.50	1.50
25-49	1.25	1.50
50	1.75	1.75
51-62	1.00	1.50
63-68	1.25	1.50
69	11.00	20.00
70	6.00	11.00
70 2nd print	1.25	1.25
71	1.75	3.00
72-73	1.25	2.00
74-79	1.25	1.25
Annual 1-6	2.00	2.00
Annual 6 2nd p.	2.00	2.00
Special 1	2.00	2.00
Special 2	3.00	3.00
Spectacular 1	1.50	1.50

BATMAN HOLY TERROR



Publisher: DC
Issue No.Elseworlds one shot
Writer: Alan Brennert
Artist: Norm Breyfogle
Colorist: Lovern Kindzierski
Cover Price: 4.95
Current Low Price: 5.00
Current High Price: 5.00

Overview: In this Elseworld book, Batman tries to get revenge on the church government that killed his parents.

HERO RATING: ★★

H.I. PICK

The Elseworld books have yet to prove themselves as real collectibles. They are great to read, but are they going to really go up in value? Some of these stories are better than others and especially better than this one.

DEALER PICK

"Elseworld books seem to be growing in popularity, and with the Batman mythos being the majority of them. It's a great thing...Not the best and not the worst Elseworlds story, but was it worth the prestige format?...A wonderful Elseworlds book, and hard to find as well...Great book up low potential."

BATMAN PRICE GUIDE

HERO CONTEST #$400



BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE

You could win a copy of this great book by simply sending in a little card to us. That's all. A 29¢ stamp and a non-winning HERO GOLD card is all it takes. But let's talk some trivia trash right now.

1. What series is Alan Moore most famous for working on?

2. What is Alan Moore doing now?

3. Who played the joker in the 1960s Batman TV series?

4. Where does he get those wonderful toys?

75	6.00	6.00
76	7.00	7.00
77-80	5.50	5.50
81-84	5.00	5.00
85	6.75	6.75
86-92	5.00	5.00
93	6.00	6.00
94	20.00	20.00
95-96	6.00	6.00
97	5.00	5.00
98-100	4.50	4.50
101-102	6.00	6.00
103-106	4.00	4.00
107-108	6.50	6.50
109-116	4.00	4.00
117-184	3.00	3.00
185-250	2.00	2.00
251-260	1.50	1.50
261	4.00	4.00
Annual1	3.00	3.00
Annual 2-3	2.00	2.00

NEW TEEN TITANS
DC Comics

1 Perez art	7.00	10.00
Dick Grayson as Nightwing in most issues		
2	15.00	20.00
1st App. Deathstroke		
3-9	3.00	3.00
10	8.00	8.00
11-20	2.00	2.00
21-30	1.50	1.50
31-33	1.00	1.00
34	4.00	4.00
35-40	1.00	1.00
2nd series		
1	3.00	3.00
2-3	2.50	2.50
4-9	2.00	2.00
10	2.00	6.00
11-19	1.50	1.50
20	2.00	2.00
21-49	1.50	1.50
Annual 1-4	2.00	2.00





ROBIN
DC Comics

1	5.00	7.00
1 2nd print	2.25	2.25
1 3rd print	1.25	1.25
2	2.75	2.75
2 2nd print	1.00	1.00
3	1.25	2.00
4-5	1.25	1.75
Annual 1	3.00	3.00

ROBIN II
DC Comics

1	1.50	1.50
2	1.50	1.50
3	1.50	1.50
4	1.50	1.50

Direct and Newsland. Multipul Covers for each

ROBIN III
DC Comics

1-6	2.25	2.25

ROBIN 3000
DC Comics

1-2	6.00	6.00

SECRET ORIGINS
DC Comics

1	3.50	3.50
2	3.00	3.00
3-5	2.50	2.50
6	4.25	4.25
7	2.00	2.00
2nd series		
1	4.00	10.00
2-4	4.50	4.50
5-7	3.25	3.25

LEGENDS
DC Comics

1 Byrne	2.50	2.50
2-5	2.00	5.00
6	2.00	8.00
New Justice League		

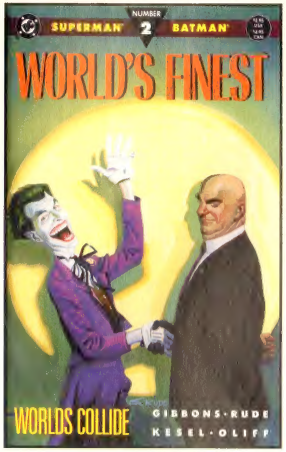
MAN-BAT
DC Comics

1	5.00	10.00
2	4.00	6.00

NEW TITANS
DC Comics

50 Perez art	4.00	4.00
Nightwing in most issues		
51-59	2.00	2.00
60	4.00	6.00
61	3.00	3.00
62-65	4.00	4.00
66-79	3.00	3.00
80-99	2.00	2.00
100	3.50	3.50
Marriage of Nightwing and Starfire		
Annual 5-8	3.00	3.00





8-10	2.00	2.00
11-12	1.75	1.75
13	4.25	4.25
14-30	1.75	1.75
31-38	1.50	1.50
39,50	4.25	4.25
40-49	1.50	1.50
one shot, 1961		
1	200.00	200.00

SECRET ORIGIN SPECIAL
DC

1	2.00	2.00

Penguin, Riddler, Two Face



SHOWCASE '93
DC Comics

1-6	2.00	2.00
7 Knightfall	2.00	4.00

TALES OF THE NEW TEEN TITANS
DC Comics

1-4	1.00	1.50

TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS
DC Comics

41	1.00	1.00
42-43	8.00	10.00
Judas Contract, Deathstroke App.		
44	8.00	10.00
Robin becomes Nightwing		
45-91	1.00	1.50

TEEN TITANS
DC Comics

1	130.00	140.00
Dick Grayson as Robin in most issues		
2	58.00	65.00
3-5	30.00	34.00
6-10	22.00	26.00
11-19	15.00	17.00
20-22	19.00	21.00
23-30	9.00	11.00
31-43	6.00	8.00
44-45	3.00	5.00
46-49	8.00	10.00
50-51	7.00	9.00
52-53	4.00	6.00

UNTOLD LEGEND OF THE BATMAN
DC Comics

1	3.50	3.50
2-3	2.50	2.50

WORLD'S FINEST COMICS
DC Comics

100	167.00	167.00
101-110	54.00	54.00
111-120	45.00	45.00
121-128	19.00	19.00
129	32.00	32.00
130-140	19.00	19.00
141-150	10.00	10.00
151-155	9.00	9.00
156	48.00	48.00
157-160	9.00	9.00
161	12.00	12.00
162-165	7.00	7.00
166	11.00	11.00
167-169	7.00	7.00
170	10.00	10.00
171-174	7.00	7.00
175-177	9.00	9.00
178	4.50	4.50
179,188	5.00	5.00
180-187	4.00	4.00
189-196	2.50	2.50
197	3.50	3.50
198-199	45.00	50.00
200-251	2.00	3.00
252-300	1.50	2.50
Limited Series		
1 Steve Rude	6.00	6.00
2-3	5.00	5.00





BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE

Publisher:	DC
Issue No.:	One Shot
Writer:	Alan More
Artist:	Brian Boland
Colorist:	John Higgins
Cover Price:	3.50
Current Low Price:	13.00
Current High Price:	18.00



Overview: The Joker shows his true insanity in this great book with Moore and Boland; and the origin of the Joker.

HERO TIP:

HERO RATING:
★★★★

H.I. PICK

"Psychopaths R Us" would be a good title for this story. This book delves into really how disturbed and scary the Joker is. Not exactly the feel-good book of the '90s, but one that is certainly worthy of *any* comic book collection.

DEALER PICK

"The Joker as a truly frightening character for perhaps the first time. Not fun, but riveting and as important to the Batman mythos as anything ever written. Investment potential peaked once but should climb again because of the new situations...Good story but not for the kiddies."

THE FINAL WORD!

Guest Commentary by Dennis O'Neil



A) Batman and Robin do not exist.
B) Batman and Robin are nothing more than ink and paper.
C) Batman and Robin are only figments of a writer's imagination.

Question: Which of the foregoing statements is false?

Answer: All of them.

But, I hereby confess, until a few years ago, I thought every one of them was gospel. Then we staged what became known around the Batman office as "The Stunt", and I learned I was wrong.

Briefly, "The Stunt": We put our co-starring character, Robin, in an explosion and gave the readers of our comic books 36 hours to dial one of two telephone numbers. The first number was vote for Robin's survival. The second wasn't. We had two versions of the end of the relevant story in a drawer, waiting for the verdict. When the telephone company told me the final tally, I felt a pang--of remorse? guilt? what?-- and when I took the page the callers had chosen and carried it down the hall to the production, I walked the walk of the pallbearer.

Which was silly, if not stupid. Wasn't it? Because, remember I believed that Batman and Robin did not exist, were nothing more than ink and paper, were only figments of writers' imaginations.

Then, the reaction: A mighty gush of interview requests from journalists. ("Hey guys", I wanted to say, "What's the story you're after here? I mean, you *do* know that Batman and Robin don't exist, don't you?") So many angry phone calls that for weeks I let the answering machine handle all incoming traffic. (And didn't these furious citizens realize that Batman and Robin are nothing more than ink and paper?) Ugly comments from my own turf, the professional comics community—"staging a Roman circus" was one accusation I remember. (But surely my fellow comics pros know, if anyone on Earth did, that Batman and Robin were only figments of a writer's imagination.)

Finally, I had to change my mind about how I've earned my living for the past quarter century. I have *not* been merely fabricating fiction, as writers and editors in other kinds of publishing do, at least not since I accepted Julie Schwartz's invitation to write Batman stories and, later, Dick Giordano's offer to edit them. Because Batman — and Superman, Wonder Woman, The Flash, Green Lantern, and a lot of other comic book heroes, including, not least, Robin — have been in existence for over 50 years. In continuous publication in the medium that spawned them, comics, and virtually every other medium, too. They have pervaded this country's collective consciousness and have become highly recognizable in most nations in the world. Even if you've never read a comic book, even if you think that comic books are an abomination and that every writer since Christopher Marlowe and every artist since Rembrandt van Rijn has been a check-chasing puller, you probably have vague knowledge of these characters, and of the mythos surrounding them. You'd have to work pretty damn hard not to. They've been all over the culture for longer than most of us have been alive. And *that* means, I belatedly realized, that they are not figments of a writer's imagination: they are figments of many different imaginations — writers, sure, and also artists, editors, actors, directors, publishers, producers, animators, and, importantly, the imaginations of the millions who have enjoyed them and, in quiet moments, have decided for themselves what these guys are really about. In short, they have entered our common experience. They are our folklore.

But they are folklore that can and must change. If they don't, they'll soon be like a mask of some forgotten god tucked into the corner of a museum, recognized by only a dedicated few specialists and of no real use to anyone as entertainment. As a rule, we're entertained by things we can relate to, not the things our grandfathers thought were really hep. So our super-hero folk figures must be allowed to evolve, which means what's external about them has to alter from time to time: costume, props, speech patterns, supporting cast, even attitudes. What shouldn't change is a character's essence, those special traits that make him fascinating. The fancy word is "archetype". Lose that and you lose your hero. The trick for us editors is to guess when to allow change to happen, and how much. We sometimes guess badly. And even when we guess correctly, we inevitably offend the considerable part of our audience that has a powerful involvement with the version of the character we're exiling to super-hero limbo. But if we didn't guess at all, if we considered ourselves merely caretakers, our characters would gradually become those museum masks and, incidentally, our jobs would be boring as dust.

— Dennis O'Neil, 1993

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